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## **SWK 521: Foundations of Social Welfare Policy Online**

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2021

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Alma Hernandez, JD, LMSW  
Office Location: Henderson Rm 322  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
University Email Address: [alma.hernandez@tamuc.edu](mailto:alma.hernandez@tamuc.edu)  
Preferred Form of Communication: email, zoom then phone  
Communication Response Time: within 48 hours

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

#### **Textbook(s) Required:**

Karger, H. J. & Stoesz, D. (2017). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach*, (8th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0-205-40182-1

**Software Required:** Access to MyLeo and MyLeo Apps such as D2L Brightspace, Gee Library Search Engine also word processing programs like MS Word or Google docs. Also access to Zoom platform.

**Optional Texts and/or Materials:** Other readings may be assigned throughout this course.

## Course Description

This foundation course in social welfare policy introduces students to social policy development, social welfare institutions and the historical and existing policies underpinning the development of social policy. Course content is designed to emphasize the effect of social policies on client systems at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. Specific attention will be given to the interaction between social welfare policies and at-risk populations. No prerequisites.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COURSES:

SWK 503, 505, 506, 553

### PROGRAM GOALS:

1. Prepare MSW graduates for professional advanced generalist practice that reflects application and integration of critical thinking, theoretical frameworks, and differential interventions.
2. Enable MSW graduates to apply ethical reasoning to advance equality, justice, and social change.
3. Promote leadership and service that is relevant to individual contexts of practice and enhances well-being and quality of life.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires a competency-based approach to identify and assess what students demonstrate in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Students achieve programmatic goals listed above through demonstration of the following competencies for Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP). Students achieve programmatic goals listed above through demonstration of the following **bolded competencies** for Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP).

**Competency 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly**

Competency 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

**Competency 2.1.3 Apply Critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments**

Competency 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Competency 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Competency 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Competency 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

**Competency 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance well-being and deliver services**

Competency 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

**Competency 2.1.10 (a)-(d) Engages, assesses, intervenes and evaluates individual, families, groups, organizations, and communities**

**Student Learning Outcomes** (Practice Behaviors)

Each competency (outlined above) describes the knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes that comprise competency at the Advanced Generalist Practice (AGP) level. While content and activities of each course in the MSW curriculum covertly or overtly addresses each of the nine competencies, identified within each course is a set of specific practice behaviors representing observable components of one for more competencies. Content and Assessment in this course reflect the following practice behaviors:

2.1.1.2 Advocates for client access to services of social work

2.1.3.3 Demonstrates effective communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues.

2.1.8.1 Is skilled at analyzing, formulation, and advocating for policies that advance social well-being

2.1.8.2 Is skilled at collaborating with colleagues and clients for effective policy practice

2.1.10[b].1 collect, organize and interpret client data

2.1.10[c].2 Implement prevention interventions to enhance client capacities

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

## Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students are expected to be skilled at using and traversing D2L Brightspace, logging on to online chats software (e.g. Zoom), and have knowledge of MS Office programs (Word, Powerpoint, Excel, etc.) and other word processing software.

## Instructional Methods

This class will be taught through a combination of face-to-face and virtual technology. This, however, may change depending CoVID-19 situation and University policy.

## Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Student responsibilities are as follow:

- To understand the commitment that you have made to yourself and to this program upon admission, which is to learn the skills required to be an effective social worker
- To attend class regularly, of course, but also to be engaged, alert and committed to its purpose throughout the course and not let distractions interfere with the learning process.
- To read the textbook as required per the schedule
- To complete assignments on a timely manner and within the standard and instructions set out in the syllabus and by the professor
- To reach out for help when in need of additional guidance
- To not wait until the end of the semester or the day of the deadline to reach out for such help
- To prioritize your education for the time that you are in the program

## GRADING

Position Statement/Oral Testimony	100 points
Policy Analysis Paper	100 points
Mid-Term Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Engagement	<u>100 points</u>
	500 points

360-400 points	A
320-359 points	B
280-319 points	C
Grades below a C are considered failing the class	

## Assessments

### SWK 521 Assignments

#### 1. POSITION STATEMENT AND ORAL TESTIMONY (50 PTS)

##### How to write a position paper:

The purpose of a position statement is to generate support on an issue. It describes a position on an issue and the rationale for that position. The position paper is based on facts that provide a solid foundation for your argument. In the position paper you should:

- Use evidence to support your position, such as statistical evidence or dates and events.
- Validate your position with authoritative references
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of your position.
- Evaluate possible solutions and suggest courses of action.

Choose an issue where there is a clear division of opinion and which is arguable with facts. You may choose an issue on which you have already formed an opinion. However, in writing about this issue you must examine your opinion of the issue critically. Prior to writing your position paper, define and limit your issue carefully. Social issues are complex with multiple solutions. Narrow the topic of your position paper to something that is manageable. Research your issue thoroughly, consulting experts and obtaining primary documents. Consider feasibility, cost-effectiveness and the political/social climate when evaluating possible solutions and courses of action.

The following structure is typical of a position paper:

An introduction—clearly identify the issue and state the author's position (should catch the reader's attention). The introduction should contain the following:

- Identification of the issue
- Statement of the position

The body: several paragraphs and should clarify the position of the author which is supported by evidence and facts (evidence can be primary source quotations, statistical data, interviews with experts, and indisputable dates or events). The body should contain the following:

- Background information
- Supporting evidence or facts
- A discussion of both sides of the issue

A conclusion should contain the following:

- Suggested courses of action
- Possible solutions

### **Part I: Position Statement (50 Points)**

In social work practice, a position statement is a form of policy declaration. Position papers that generally provide detail and specificity arising out of an analysis and are aimed at enlightening and educating as well as influencing. You may choose from state, federal, or international policies.

You are required to hand in a 2-page position statement in letter form. You must support your position with a minimum of 3 journal articles. The letter should be written single spaced, 12-point font, and Times New Roman or Arial type.

You are required to use the following format:

1. Identification of the bill and its sponsor (selected policy).
2. Identify yourself and the organization you represent for the purposes of this issue
3. Brief summary statement of your position.
4. Summary of the issues and rationale for your position.
5. Statement of recommendation for changes.
6. Conclusion summarizing key points
7. Closing

### **Part II: Oral Testimony (50 Points)**

You are required to give oral testimony to a “gubernatorial body” presenting the position you took in your position statement. You will record yourself on a video (up to 5 minutes) and upload it (more details later). You are required to use the following format:

1. Identification of the person giving testimony.
2. Statement of appreciation to the hearing committee.
3. Brief statement of position taken.
4. Summary of issues and statement of rationale.
5. Statement of recommendations or changes.
6. Offer of assistance and thanks.

## **2. POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER (100 PTS)**

The purpose of this task is to arrive at a general understanding of the present-day policies that have been established to deal with the social problem under consideration. More specifically, policy analysis attempts to determine historical antecedents to existing policy; the values and goals implicit and/or explicit in a policy; and the sources – legislative, judicial or administrative– from which the current formalized policy has emanated. Within this context the student examines the scope of coverage, the kind and level of benefits to be provided in the interest of attaining the goals set forth in the policy, and other specific features that influence the manner in which social services are made available to the problem population. Consider how policies are written to affect certain populations based on gender, sexual orientation, race and/or class.

**You will select a current state or federal social welfare policy. Using the model for policy analysis in the textbook (Chapter 3), you will write a Policy Analysis paper on your chosen policy. Papers should be 12-14 pages.** Quality is considered more important than quantity.

Students will submit sections of their Policy Analysis Paper by the due date for approval and review by the instructor. If students do NOT submit these initial components of the assignment **by the due date**, there will be a **10-point deduction** from the Policy Analysis paper grade. Submission of the sections paper will reassure students that they are "on the right track" and they will receive sufficient feedback to help direct the completion of their paper.

### **Guidelines for all Written Work:**

Written work for this class must be in APA style (unless stated otherwise) using 12-point font. Grading criteria for written work includes: thoroughness, logical development of points, clarity of written expression, application of scholarly research and appropriateness of information presented as it relates to topic chosen. This is a graduate level course and expectations are considerably higher than those at an undergraduate level. It is important to demonstrate your ability read and understand the instructions for each assignment, to do research at the library, to critically analyze various positions, comparing and contrasting strengths and weaknesses, and presenting facts in a manner persuading the reader to his/her own conclusions. In conducting scholarly research, sources included should cover legislation and/or public documents, books and journal articles. Citations from course texts, the internet (unless accessing an on-line journal or government document), popular magazines or handouts given by the instructor do not represent scholarly research and should be used sparingly or not at all. **The quality of your resource selection will be evaluated.**

# TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

## LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>



## **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

Instructor will respond to email queries within 2 business days.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

#### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

#### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

#### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

## **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

## **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who

have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content**

### **Engagement Policy**

#### ***Final Evaluation and Grade Depends on both Classroom attendance and Participation***

Inadequate participation or lack of required time commitment in each class significantly affects students' grades. No matter the course venue, students must engage in a comparable amount of time. Expectations of both Face-to-Face classes and those with Online components include time spent reading and studying course material.

To earn a level of competency within a specific course, students must demonstrate both mastery of content and active engagement.

Mastery of content areas is evidenced by successful completion of course assignments such as written papers, group project deliverables, tests/quizzes and other tangible products designed by instructors to evaluate knowledge and skills.

Additionally, the Social Work Profession is built upon human interactions and building human relationships – which is defined as engagement. Engagement is defined as meaningful involvement in interactions with instructor, peers, outside stakeholders as appropriate (such as contacting a social worker to interview for a required assignment). Within the classroom setting, whether virtual or F2F, students must actively participate in 80% of engagement activities as outlined by individual instructors. These activities can include participation in a live, synchronous virtual classes, attending a Face to Face course when appropriate, interacting with peers in posted discussions and collaborating in group interactive projects.

Students must meet standards for content mastery on tangible assignments and meet the threshold of active engagement 80% of the time during a semester. Instructors are experts in each course content area and set the standards for students to meet for successful completion of the course.

As we enter the Fall semester, we are all working under stresses and strains related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative we communicate consistently and frequently. If, for any reason, you are not able to complete assignments or actively engage in the course, you MUST reach out to your instructor and let him or her know.

### **Student Conduct**

Students preparing to become professional social workers must adhere to the *University Code of Conduct, Department Code of Conduct and National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics*.

**University Code of Conduct** located in the *Student Guide Book* at

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campuslife/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf> (pp 34- 66). On the University Website under Campus Life Documents

To become aware of University policies related to student academic and behavioral expectations for students refer to the Guidebook.

### **Department Code of Conduct**

*"Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class/lab/internship practicum or to block access to online courses and may refer offenses to the [Academic and Professional Issues Committee (API)] or to the Department Head. More serious offences by be referred to the University Police Department and/or the Judicial Affairs Office for disciplinary action" (Student Guidebook p 35)*

Social Work students conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.

Closely linked with professional recognition is the social worker's compliance with the

profession's ethical standards. It is imperative for professional social workers to be competent and ethical in practice if the profession is to maintain the public trust. It is essential that each social work student gain a thorough understanding of the ethical principles that guide practice and actively demonstrate in behavior, both in and out of the classroom. Student conduct is to reflect the tenets of *NASW Code of Ethics* (located at <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp> ) on the NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org>

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

### TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Week #	Course Event	READ Chapter	Date due
1	Social Policy and the American Welfare State	1	
2	A Brief History of the American Social Welfare State	2	
3	Discrimination in American Society	4	
4	Poverty in America	5	<b>Position Statement/ Oral Testimony Video</b>
5	Privatization and Human Services; Criminal Justice	7, 14	
6			
7	The Making of Governmental Policy The Voluntary Sector	6, 8	
8	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>		
9	Social Insurance Programs	10	<b>Sections Paper</b>
10	Public Assistance Programs	11	

<b>11</b>	Tax Policy and Income Distribution	9	
<b>12</b>	The American Health Care System; Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy	12, 13	<b>Policy Analysis Paper Due</b>
<b>13</b>			
<b>14</b>	Child Welfare Policy & Housing Policy	15, 16	
<b>15</b>	The Policy of Food Policy and Rural Life	17	
<b>16</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		