

# SWK-D618 Social Policy and Services - Special Practice Areas in Social Work (3 cr.)

## Course Information

**Semester Year:** XXXXX  
**Section Number:** XXXXX  
**Location:** XXXXX  
**Day:** XXXXX  
**Time:** XXXXX

**Instructor:** XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX  
**Office:** XXXX  
**Email:** XXXX  
**Phone:** XXXXX  
**Office Hours:** XXXXXXXXXXXX

## Course Description

The purpose of this course is to develop the competencies necessary to effect policy change for service delivery systems at an organization, community, and legislative level. Emphasis is placed on policy practice, policy analysis, and advocacy leadership with direct involvement in the political and organizational processes as an integral part of the learning process. The content of the course will focus on the role of the “social policy practitioner” closely examining the relationship of social work values and ethics to social policies and service delivery systems, especially as they relate to diverse and oppressed populations.

## Course Competencies

Council on Social Work Education (CWSE) 2015 EPAS Competencies addressed by this course.

### Primary

- Competency 5: Engage with Policy Practice

Social workers identify, assess, analyze, and advocate for social policies at the local, state, and federal level that impact well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.

## Course Objectives

- D618-01** Understand and analyze the major social issues and trends, including their historical context, affecting the development of social policy at all levels, locally, nationally, and globally.
- D618-02** Demonstrate a grasp of the legal frameworks, along with the political, economic, and social constraints on agencies, historically and into the twenty-first century that influence and govern services.
- D618-03** Develop an awareness of the integral relation between policy and the structure, organization, and funding arrangements of service delivery systems as well as the intergovernmental relationships involved in dealing with policy issues.
- D618-04** Examine current data and research to analyze social policy issues as well as the impact of federal and state policies on related populations.
- D618-05** Critically analyze the issues of social, economic and environmental justice, and power that lead to health inequities, discrimination, and oppression (for age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual

orientation, and veteran status) in relation to policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

- D618-06** Demonstrate cultural humility, cultural competence, and enhanced self-awareness when working with populations that have been traditionally marginalized (on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status) recognizing the significant impact social programs and policies can have on these groups.
- D618-07** Engage in policy design using ethical frameworks to understand the policy formation process, policy research and analysis, along with the strategic planning needed for social policy initiatives.
- D618-08** Apply advocacy skills and strategies working in collaboration with community members, groups, and organizations to participate effectively in the legislative process.
- D618-09** Participate in writing a bill or a policy brief using evaluative measures and selective framework(s) that gauge the policy impact and the potential for unintended consequences.

## Required Texts

Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014). *New perspectives on poverty: Policies, programs, and practice*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum.

National Association of Social Workers (2015). *Social work speaks* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

## Course Content

In this course, students will develop essential policy practice skills with a focus on assessment, analysis, and advocacy in relation to service delivery systems that address diverse populations and correlating social issues. These populations include, but are not limited to, age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status. Students will examine the significant political and policy contexts at organizational, community, and legislative levels and will consider multiple policy strategies for achieving social, economic, and environmental justice and combating the causes and effects of institutionalized forms of oppression. This course will also utilize a variety of policy frameworks and models to advance skill building with an emphasis on social work values and ethics and a focus on cultural humility at all levels of policy intervention.

Students will accomplish learning objectives in this course through a variety of classroom tools, including videos, small and large group discussions, group projects, written assignments, and/or student presentations. The primary evaluation of student learning will be completed through a policy analysis assignment that provides students the opportunity to research and evaluate a specific policy then develop a policy statement based on the outcomes of the overall policy analysis.

## Resources

- Canvas email will also be used a way to communicate between instructor and students. You are expected to check the course announcements on Canvas before each class.
- Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and be posted on Canvas (Resource tab).

## Course Outline

### Module 1: Poverty Perspectives and Theories

Weeks 1 and 2

#### Overview

- A. This module provides information on contemporary definitions and theories of poverty.

#### Assignments

##### Readings

1. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), What is poverty? pp. 1-35 of required text.
2. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), Poverty: What you can do, pp. 477-495 of required text.
3. Giffords, E. D. & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), Contemporary responses to poverty, pp. 36-79 of required text.
4. Vu, C. M. (2010). The influence of social science theories on the conceptualization of poverty in social welfare. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 20(8), 989-1010 (Canvas).
5. Yapa, L. (1996). What causes poverty? A postmodern view. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 86(4), 707-728 (Canvas).
6. National Public Radio. (2009, March 23). The culture of poverty. Talk of the Nation [Transcript]. Retrieved from [NPR Talk of the Nation npr.org](http://www.npr.org) (Canvas).
7. Bradshaw, T. K. (2006). Theories of poverty and anti-poverty programs in community development. Rural Poverty Research Center Working Paper No. 06-05. Columbia, MO: Rural Poverty Research Center (Canvas).
8. Clark, S. (2007). Social work students' perceptions on poverty. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 16(1/2), 149-166 (Canvas).
9. Stone, C., Trisi, D., Sherman, A., & DeBot, B. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2013). *A guide to statistics on historical trends in income inequality* (Canvas).

##### Individual Assignments

1. Readings Quiz 1
2. Civics Quiz
3. Activity: Select Your Population At-Risk
4. Activity: Identify Your Community Partner Agency
5. Activity: Begin Your Annotated Bibliography

##### Group Assignment

1. Discussion: Theories on Poverty
2. Activity: Identify Your Community Partner Agency

### Module 2: Analyzing Service Delivery Systems

Weeks 3, 4, and 5

## Overview

- A. This module reviews some content regarding the ecological and systems theories and the relationship to the three-sector economy. This information will help students understand the primary concepts that will be applied in analyzing service delivery systems.

## Assignments

### Readings

1. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), Employment, poverty, and social welfare, pp. 80-113 of required text.
2. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), People experiencing homelessness, pp. 131-167 of required text.
3. Giffords, E. D. & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), Families, women, and children, pp. 182-219 of required text.
4. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.) (2014), Older adults, pp. 238-272 of required text.
5. National Association of Social Workers (2015), Poverty and economic justice, pp. 235-239 of required text.
6. National Association of Social Workers (2015), Homelessness, pp. 158-165 of required text.
7. National Association of Social Workers (2015), Welfare reform, pp. 316-319 of required text.
8. National Association of Social Workers (2015), Aging and wellness, pp. 21-25 of required text.
9. Cloward, R. A., & Piven, F. F. (1977). The acquiescence of social work: Social welfare agencies enhance capitalism. *Society* (January/February), 55-63 (Canvas).

### Individual Assignments

1. Readings Quiz 2
2. Application: SSDS Analysis #1

### Group Assignment

1. Discussion: Employment, poverty, homelessness, and the social welfare response
2. Discussion: Families, Women, Children and Older Adults

## Module 3: Policies, Trends, and Issues Affecting Service Delivery Systems

### Weeks 6, 7, and 8

## Overview

- A. This module focuses on identifying the key policies, trends, and issues that impact the social service delivery system under study, including key principles and steps entailed in social policy analysis.

## Assignments

### Readings

1. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.). (2014), People with disabilities, pp. 290-326 of required text.
2. Giffords, E. D., & Garber, K. R. (Eds.). (2014), Persons with mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders, pp. 327-387 of required text.

3. National Association of Social Workers. *Social work speaks* (2015), “Welfare reform”, “Aging and wellness”, “People with disabilities”, and “Mental health” chapters from required text.

#### Individual Assignments

1. SSDS Analysis #2
2. SSDS Analysis #3

#### Group Assignment

1. Discussion: People with Disabilities or Mental Illness and Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders

## Module 4: Community Dialogue

Weeks 9, 10, and 11

### Overview

- A. This module focuses on developing your skills for gathering community/citizen input in the change process.

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation website topics “What are dialogue and deliberation?”, “Dialogue and deliberation methods”, and “Conditions for successful dialogue and deliberation” (Canvas).
2. Kurland, R. (2006). Planning: The neglected component of group development. *Social Work with Groups*, 28(3-4), 9-16 (Canvas).
3. Harwood Institute. (n. d.). United Way campaign for the common good: Community conversation workbook (Canvas).
4. Workgroup for Community Health and Development. (2013). Chapter 3, Section 17: Leading a community dialogue on building a healthy community. Community Tool Box (Canvas).
5. The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation Resource Guide on Public Engagement (Canvas).

#### Individual Assignments

1. Readings Quiz 3
2. Application: Community Dialogue Proposal
3. Application: Professional Memorandum
4. Application: Community Dialogue Reflection

## Module 5: Systems Advocacy

Weeks 12, 13, and 14

### Overview

- A. This module provides students with supports to complete their presentations and White Papers.

## Assignments

### Readings

1. Policy Brief guidelines and illustrations (Canvas)
2. Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab. (2010). White paper: Purpose and audience (Canvas).
3. Hoefler, R. (2012). Presenting your information effectively. In *Advocacy practice for social justice* (pp. 130-160) (Canvas).

### Individual Assignments

1. Application: Collaborative Community Service Reflection Paper
2. Application: Service Hours Report
3. Application: Policy Brief (signature assignment)
4. Application: Annotated Bibliography

### Group Assignment

1. Discussion: Peer Presentation

## Assignments and Grading

More specific instructions for each assignment will be posted on Canvas. Instructor also will discuss details or answer any questions related to assignment during the class and office hours.

All assignments should be produced on a wordprocessor (or typed), double spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, carefully edited and proofed, using no smaller than a 12 point font, and conforming to APA style (6th ed.)

## Assignments

1. Readings Quiz 1 (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....9 pts.
2. Civics Quiz (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....29 pts.
3. Activity: Identify Your Community Partner Agency (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....1 pts.
4. Activity: Begin Your Annotated Bibliography (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....0 pts.
5. Discussion: Theories on Poverty (Group Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....10 pts.

6. Readings Quiz 2 (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....10 pts.
7. Application: SSDS Analysis #1 (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
8. Discussion: Employment, poverty, homelessness, and the social welfare response (Group Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....10 pts.
9. Discussion: Families, Women, and Children & Older Adults (Group Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....10 pts.
10. Application: SSDS Analysis #2 Policies (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
11. Application: SSDS Analysis #3 Issues and Trends (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
12. Discussion: Identifying Policies and Issues for Persons with Disabilities, Mental Illness, and Co-occurring Substance Use Disorders
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....10 pts.
13. Application: Proposal for Community Dialogue Group (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
14. Application: Professional Memorandum for Community Dialogue Group (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....5 pts.
15. Application: Community Dialogue Reflection Paper (Individual Assignment)
  - a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
16. Application: Collaborative Community Service Reflection Paper (Individual Assignment)

- a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
17. Application: Service Hours Report (Individual Assignment)
- a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....15 pts.
18. Application: Annotated Bibliography (Individual Assignment)
- a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....20 pts.
19. Discussion: Peer Presentation (Group Assignment)
- a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....30 pts.
20. Application: Policy Brief (Signature Assignment) (Individual Assignment)
- a. DUE: .....TBD
  - b. Points: .....50 pts.

## Assignment Details

### *Forum Discussions*

Forum discussions provide the mechanism for students to acquire an advanced generalist perspective in social policy and services. Learners will engage each other in the forums to discuss theories of poverty and other selected topics based on readings in the course texts and popular media. Forum discussions enable learners to integrate multiple perspectives on poverty issues as well as populations affected by poverty. The discussions also help build awareness of critical contemporary issues and current policy debates.

### *Collaborative Service Learning (minimum of 10 hours)*

As a community engagement requirement of the course, the learner will partner with an organization in her/his community that serves a human need and a population at risk of poverty. Chapter 11 of the Giffords and Garber text summarizes multiple populations at risk of poverty that are the subject of Chapters 3 through 10. Each learner is advised to select a population and issue from these chapters in order to utilize the resources provided by the authors as a start for research and the annotated bibliography.

Learners will then engage a community partner organization that provides services to this population. Learners offer two services to their community partner organizations: (1) research and analysis to support a final advocacy product (a Policy Brief) for use by the community partners' organizations; and, (2) a minimum of 10 hours of front line volunteer, nonpaid service. Ideally this latter service will include some contact with beneficiaries of the organization's service. The direct service hours may be done in any format – for example, two hours/week or two five-hour commitments – but should involve a minimum of two separate days of service. Each learner will submit service plans to the instructor early in the quarter. Learners will receive 1.5 points for every hour of documented front line nonpaid

service to the community partner's organization, up to 15 points. Learners should not use their employing agency unless it can be demonstrated that the agency is large enough to have distinctly-situated units or sub-contracting organizations that accept volunteer service. The community engagement experience is NOT a practicum, so there is no need for supervision by an MSW.

Each learner will wrap up the service experience with a reflection paper.

### *Social Service Delivery System (SSDS) Analysis*

Once learners have identified the population and issue of interest and made some initial contact with the community partner organization, they utilize worksheets to describe the area of human and social need in depth and analyze the service delivery system that addresses that need. The three dimensions of this analysis are: (1) identifying private, public and voluntary organizations in the community that provide goods and/or services to the target population; (2) examining federal, state, and local policies that are presently in place to address the need; and, (3) examining current trends and issues in the learner's own community or region. The research and analysis begins with these worksheets for instructor input, but continues throughout the quarter. The ultimate goal of the system analysis will be to help learners gain an initial focus for policy advocacy that can be further explored in the second half of the quarter.

### *Community Dialogue*

Learners will physically convene a group of citizens in their communities to discuss the citizen perceptions of the selected social issue and its relationship to poverty. Learners should audiotape the dialogue or ask someone to take good notes. Along with information from research on the service delivery system, this dialogue will provide citizen input for the development of the Policy Brief that will be delivered to the community partner. There are three related assignments: (1) proposal for the dialogue; (2) follow-up memo after instructor input; and, (3) summary and reflection on the dialogue.

### *Presentation to Peers*

Learners will make presentations to peers through the discussion function on the population at risk and social issue, the service delivery system in the community, and feedback from their community dialogues and collaborative service. The purpose is not only to summarize and share updated findings (showing research progress from the earlier worksheets), but also to ask for more input from peers. Thus there is also a component related to responding to peers.

### *Policy Brief - Advocacy Product for Community Partner (Signature Assignment)*

The Policy Brief brings all the elements of the course together. Based on reading the historical and most recent perspectives related to their population at risk, analysis of policies and services in the community, interaction with and service on behalf of the community partner, as well as on subsequent dialogue with a selected group of individuals in their communities, learners will develop a Policy Brief as an advocacy product to make recommendations for system changes. Module 5 will present several alternative ways, with examples, to approach the Policy Brief. Sample Policy Brief products will be available.

## Grading Standards

Papers are graded on the quality of the final product not on the effort you extended completing them. The grade of A is reserved for truly outstanding work that goes beyond basic requirements.

In the Indiana University School of Social Work MSW program, grades of B are the expected norm. Reflecting competency and proficiency, grades of B reflect good or high quality work typical of graduate students in professional schools. Indeed, professors typically evaluate students' work in such a way that B is the average grade. Grades in both the A and the C range are relatively uncommon and reflect work that is significantly superior to or significantly inferior, respectively, to the average, high quality, professional work conducted by most IU MSW students. Because of this approach to grading, students who routinely earned A grades in their undergraduate studies may conclude that a B grade reflects a decrease in their academic performance. Such is not the case. Grades of B in the IU MSW program reflect the average, highly competent, proficient quality of our students. In a sense, a B grade in graduate school is analogous to an A grade in undergraduate studies. MSW students must work extremely hard to achieve a B grade. If you are fortunate enough receive a B, prize it as evidence of the professional quality of your work.

Grades of A reflect Excellence. Excellent scholarly products and academic or professional performances are substantially superior to the "good," "the high quality," "the competent," or the "satisfactory." They are unusual, exceptional, and extraordinary. Criteria for assignments are not only met, they are exceeded by a significant margin. Excellence is a rare phenomenon. As a result, relatively few MSW students earn A grades.

Grades of B signify good or high quality scholarly products and academic or professional performance. Grades in the B range reflect work expected of a conscientious graduate student in a professional program. Criteria for assignments are met in a competent, thoughtful, and professional manner. However, the criteria are not exceeded and the quality is not substantially superior to other good quality products or performances. There is a clear distinction between the good and the excellent. We expect that most MSW students will earn grades in the B range—reflecting the good or high quality work expected of competent future helping professionals.

Grades of C and C+ signify work that is marginal in nature. The scholarly products or professional performances meet many but not all of the expected criteria. The work approaches but does not quite meet the standards of quality expected of a graduate student in a professional school. Satisfactory in many respects, its quality is not consistently so and cannot be considered of good or high quality. We anticipate that a minority of MSW students will earn C and C+ grades.

Grades of C- and lower reflect work that is unsatisfactory. The products or performances do not meet several, many, or most of the criteria. The work fails to approach the standards of quality expected of a graduate student and a future MSW-level professional. We anticipate that a small percentage of MSW students will earn unsatisfactory grades of C-, D, and F.

### *Grading scale*

Grade minimums are as follows [Note: grades below C are Unsatisfactory in the MSW Program]:

A	93%	Excellent, Exceptional Quality
A-	90%	Superior Quality
B+	87%	Very Good, Slightly Higher Quality
B	83%	Good, High Quality (expected of most MSW students)
B-	80%	Satisfactory Quality

C+	77%	Marginal, Modestly Acceptable Quality
C	73%	Marginal, Minimally Acceptable Quality
C-	70%	Unsatisfactory Quality

## Course Policies

### Assignment

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. If you need to extend a deadline you MUST speak to me in advance of the due date to get an approval and an agreement will be reached. Late submission (except by prior agreement) will be marked down 5% per day late. IU has a subscription with the Turnitin plagiarism detection service, and faculty members have the right to submit student papers to the service to check for originality. Turnitin.com service will be used for all student papers in this course.

### Attendance and participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions. Students should complete readings and homework as assigned and come to class prepared for discussion and questions. Because of the nature of this course and group assignments, regular attendance is required and extremely important. Class attendance and active participation in class activities are considered essential for the satisfactory completion of the course objectives. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get notes from other students regarding materials covered during your absence. If you are absent on the day when an assignment is due, you need to submit your assignment before the beginning of the class. Missing more than 2 of the scheduled classes will result in a letter-grade deduction for the course. Late arrivals and early departures will also lead to course point deductions. It's up to instructor's discretion to decide the deduction points. If you miss five or more classes you will fail the course.

## Bibliography

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