

# SWK-S 352 Social Welfare Policy and Practice (3 cr.)

## Course Information

<b>Semester Year:</b>	XXXXX	<b>Instructor:</b>	XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX
<b>Section Number:</b>	XXXXX	<b>Office:</b>	XXXX
<b>Location:</b>	XXXXX	<b>Email:</b>	XXXX
<b>Day:</b>	XXXXX	<b>Phone:</b>	XXXX
<b>Time:</b>	XXXXX	<b>Office Hours:</b>	XXXX

## Course Description

This social welfare policy course builds on SWK S251 by exploring in depth the current social welfare delivery system through policy analysis using a variety of frameworks while developing policy practice skills. The course emphasis on critical thinking, policy analysis, and policy-practice skills helps students understand and influence global, national, state, local and agency policies that affect delivery of social services in local communities. The course develops policy analysis and policy-practice skills within the context of social work ethics and the profession's commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice.

## Course Competencies

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

### Primary

- 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 8).

### Secondary

- 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

## Course Objectives

- S352-01** Analyze social welfare policies and delivery systems using different frameworks.
- S352-02** Frame the social work role in basic policy making processes, including the use of advocacy and empowerment.
- S352-03** Describe the roles and relationships of governments, businesses, and the not-for-profit sector in the provision of human services.
- S352-04** Evaluate the influence of politics, economics, and cultural and social values, including the perspectives of all vulnerable populations, in the development and implementation of social policy decisions.

- S352-05** Analyze the relationship between social work values and beliefs, current delivery systems, and current social policy issues.
- S352-06** Evaluate the impact of social policies and programs on individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and professional practice.
- S352-07** Use a broad array of beginning policy practice skills to initiate and attempt to influence the development of social policy within agencies and the broader community.
- S352-08** Determine potential allies and opponents in initiating a policy change through analysis of the forces supporting and opposing different policy options.
- S352-09** Write policy briefs, advocacy letters, and other documents to impact policy discussions and public perception.
- S352-10** Communicate with elected officials, agency leaders, and other decision makers and effectively advocate for people who lack access to those in power.
- S352-11** Analyze the use and impact of technology and globalization in social policy with a focus on Indiana.

## Required Texts

Cummins, L.K., Byers, K.V., & Pedrick, L. (2011). *Policy practice for social workers: New strategies for a new era*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

## Course Content

The course provides students the opportunity to develop and practice policy-practice skills needed to influence decision makers at the agency, community, state, and national levels. This course explores the social welfare delivery system through analysis of social welfare policy. The course explores the policy development steps from problem identification through implementation. The course examines policy as practice helping the student develop policy-practice skills.

The major evaluation of students' progress in the course requires demonstration of competencies in policy analysis, policy advocacy process, and policy advocacy skills. Students work individually and in small groups to analyze policy, develop a semester long policy advocacy project focused on existing or proposed legislation at the state level, then design, implement, and report on efforts to influence the existing policy or proposed legislation.

## 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: Course introduction

Date

### Overview

- A. Introduction to course
- B. Review syllabus
- C. Review history of success social change movements
- D. Read and discuss materials from the Civil Rights movement
- E. Introduction of mindfulness

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Dr. Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail and other relevant documents

#### Written Assignments

1. Talents and Challenges
2. Course topic preferences

## Module 2: Generalist practice skills application to advocacy

Date

### Overview

- A. Discuss how practice skills are useful in advocacy and how they are applied differently
- B. Team building exercises
- C. Establish team goals and expectations

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 1

#### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions

## Module 3: Forces that shape policy, political agendas

Date

### Overview

- A. Lecture on political forces
- B. Discuss reflection questions
- C. Reflect on political forces observed in documentary

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick Ch. 4
2. View documentary How to Survive a Plague

#### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions

## Module 4: Legislative process and interest groups

Date

### Overview

- A. Review news highlights of the week
- B. Guest speaker Kathy Byers
- C. Discuss framing of issue
- D. Discuss reflection questions
- E. First team meeting

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 10

#### Written Assignments

1. Agenda and minutes for team meeting #1
2. Reflection questions

## Module 5: Ethic of Care

Date

### Overview

- A. Lecture on specific principles of the E. of C.
- B. Teams practice applying E of C to local non-profit
- C. Teams practice applying E of C to current legislation
- D. Team meeting

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 9

#### Written Assignments

1. Agenda and minutes for team meeting #2
2. Team advocacy project proposal

## Module 6: Media and public opinion

Date

### Overview

- A. Lecture on media frames
- B. Review and assess letters to the editor
- C. Compare coverage of news items from different media outlets

### Assignments

#### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapters 6 & 7
2. 2 letters to the editor
3. Front page of a newspaper

#### Written Assignments

1. First peer update

2. Deadlines and Consequences
3. Reflection questions
4. Agenda and minutes for team meeting #3

## Module 7: Building Coalitions

Date

### *Overview*

- A. Assessing power structures
- B. Empowering clients
- C. Introduce Policy in the News assignment

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 11
2. Addition material provided in Canvas

#### *Written Assignments*

1. Agenda and minutes for 4<sup>th</sup> team meeting
2. Reflection questions
3. Coalition building exercise completed in class

## Module 8: Stages of policy making

Date

### *Overview*

- A. Lecture and discussion on stages of policy making
- B. Reflection questions
- C. Policy in the News presentation and discussion

### *Assignments*

#### *Readings*

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 8
2. Written Assignments
3. Reflection questions

## Module 9: Approaches to policy making

Date

### *Overview*

- A. Lecture on approaches to policy making based on issue and level of application ( local, state, agency)
- B. Review requirements for the Policy Practice Portfolio
- C. Team meeting
- D. Policy in the News

## Assignments

### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 8

### Written Assignments

1. Legislative Analysis
2. Agenda and minutes for 5<sup>th</sup> team meeting

## Module 10: Campaigns

Date

### Overview

- A. Engaging in the electoral process
- B. Designing issue campaigns
- C. Update on team advocacy projects
- D. Policy in the News

### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 12

### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions

## Module 11: Political empowerment

Date

### Overview

- A. Use of political power
- B. Strategies to gain political power
- C. Shifts in political power
- D. Policy in the News

### Readings

1. Cummins, Byers, & Pedrick, Chapter 14

### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions
2. Agenda and minutes for 6<sup>th</sup> team meeting
3. Second peer update

## Module 12: TBD

Date

### Overview

- A. Seventh groups meeting

### Written Assignments

1. Agenda and minutes for 7<sup>th</sup> team meeting
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> checkpoint advocacy event

## Module 13: Civil Rights Movement

Date

### Overview

- A. Discussion and reflection on lessons from civil rights movement
- B. Policy in the News

### Readings

1. Segments of Eye on the Prize documentary. Link provided in Canvas

### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions
2. Policy Practice Portfolio

## Module 14: Civil Rights Movement, con't

Date

### Overview

- A. Discussion and reflection on lessons from civil rights movement
- B. Policy in the News

### Readings

1. Segments of Eye on the Prize documentary. Link provided in Canvas

### Written Assignments

1. Reflection questions

## Module 15: Presentations on lessons learned

Date

**Topics and readings for the final 3 weeks of the semester determined by student interest and current events.**

## 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 word processor (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. Attendance
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....variable depending on number of absences
2. Participation
  - a. DUE: .....

- b. Final Grade Percentage: .....15%
- 3. Analysis of Legislation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....5%
- 4. Agenda and Minutes
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....15%
- 5. Policy Practice Portfolio
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....17%
- 6. Peer updates
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....5%
- 7. Team advocacy project
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....17%
- 8. Peer evaluation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage: .....15%
- 9. Policy in the News
  - a. DUE.....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage.....15%
- 10. Team presentation
  - a. DUE: .....
  - b. Final Grade Percentage.....8.5%

## Assignment Details

### *Policy in the News*

Each student is required to post a topic and discussion in Canvas about current events that have policy implications related to social work either locally, nationally, or globally. Topics selected should include *the oppressed groups that you have selected or had in SWK S331*. Examples may include statements of positions on various social welfare policies (both current and proposed), observations of how policies operate in your workplace or volunteer agency, critical reflections on classroom discussions, or government policies. **Duplication of the same policy issue are not allowed and unacceptable. Each**



**student must address and post a different policy issue. First come, first serve for the policy issue even if you have the same oppressed group. Points will be lost for duplicate policy issues.**

When you present your topic for discussion, provide the following information:

- A brief description of the issue including who is proposing the policy, the target population and the primary problem (the problem being addressed by the policy), and identify the environmental level or setting for the change being proposed (local, state, federal, executive, judicial, or legislative).
- Discuss how as a social worker, you will address potential challenges that you may encounter when working with the oppressed group identified both from the client's perspective and your personal bias.
- Conduct research to provide background and context on your topic or social issue to support the information found in the news item.
- Post one policy related question for the class at the end of your discussion.

### *Analysis of Legislation*

Each student will choose one piece of legislation and provide a report on the following:

1. The number of your bill (legislation) and a one sentence summary of its intended purpose.
2. Using the Ethic of Care Framework, identify the target population, problem or issue to be addressed, services or intervention approach to be initiated, potential impact (both intended and unintended consequences) and how policy is to be evaluated based on outcomes expected.
3. Analyze the language of the bill and what it actually means.
4. Discuss what aspects of the bill you supported and what aspects you opposed. Provide a rationale for the reasons for your support and opposition (based on both research knowledge and value positions) in paragraph form.
5. What possible costs and benefits are not addressed in the fiscal impact statement? What did you learn from analyzing the fiscal impact statement? What fiscal issues are still unclear to you?
6. Identify the stakeholders who are likely to support or oppose your position and why.
7. Provide ideas on the best way to frame the issue to gather their support or lessen opposition.

### *Individual Policy Practice Portfolio*

All four of these written products may be focused on your Group project or other policy issues. They do not all have to be on the same topic.

Advocacy letter to elected official (See Tips in Chapter 10 of text)

- Short (1 page), grammatically correct, individualized, courteous
- Remind official of any past contact (if applicable)
- Identify the bill or issue in the first sentence
- Relate any personal experience with the issue
- Ask official to take specific action
- Include your contact information

**Send letter to the elected official and send confirmation of receipt to instructor**

Report of verbal conversation with elected official or staff member

- Date and time of conversation, timing of conversation given legislative or other processes
- Context – in person or phone, location
- Summarize conversation – questions you asked and the decision maker’s response
- Indicate how you felt about this interaction – for example, were you empowered, did you feel dismissed?

**If you talk directly to an elected official, you receive 5 bonus points for this assignment.**

Letter to the editor

- Follow the guidelines of the publication for length
- Time letter to be in response to current event or recent article/letter to editor
- Use both research and personal experience to make your points
- Clarity and concise writing are essential for letters to the editor, make every word count.
- Begin letter with an engaging sentence and end with a call to action

**Submit your letter to a newspaper and send confirmation of receipt to instructor**

Policy brief - two pages maximum. The policy brief should contain the following elements.

- Key talking points – facts and statistics in support of your position.
- Key points are clearly identified and the policy brief is designed to highlight the key points.
- Creativity and design are essential components of this assignment.

You may use Microsoft Office Publisher or Microsoft Office Word to create this document.

### *Signature Assignment: Group Policy Advocacy Project*

Students work individually and in small groups to analyze policy, develop a semester long policy advocacy project focused on existing or proposed legislation at the state level, then design, implement, and report on efforts to influence the existing policy or proposed legislation. Individuals will develop a portfolio with advocacy products relevant to the group project that includes among other items a policy analysis and an evaluation of the group’s policy advocacy efforts. Periodic updates on projects and the progress of the advocacy efforts will be provided to the rest of the class throughout the semester.

## 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.

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 BSW 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 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 BSW 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 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 BSW 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 student and a future BSW-level professional. We anticipate that a small percentage of BSW 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 BSW 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.