

SWK-S 505 Social Policy Analysis and Practice (3 cr.)

Course Information

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

Course Description

This course examines the processes that influence the development of social policy and social services. Included are legislative and political processes, models of policy analysis, service delivery and policy implementation. Effects of these on people are considered from global, political, economic, environmental and social policy perspectives.

This course is developed around the general proposition that social workers utilize knowledge and skills to carry out roles and functions critical for practice. Such knowledge and skills include the application of social policy analysis, the legislative process, the role and impact of politics and political choice on the quality of life of people, and the effect of economic-social policy decision and judicial actions on social services. In addition, the course examines the variability of the common and uncommon attributes of service delivery systems.

Course Competencies

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

Primary

- 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers are knowledgeable about policy formulation and analysis (CSWE, 2015 EPAS, p. 8).

Secondary

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

Course Objectives

- S505-01** Distinguish the common attributes of all service delivery systems, such as auspices, organizations, decision-making processes, need-demand factors and provider-consumer relationships. Evaluate and apply research literature related to social work practice.

- S505-02** Assess the impact of the variability of the common attributes of service delivery on social service systems. Demonstrate a beginning understanding of the uses and methods used in single-system and program evaluation designs.
- S505-03** Analyze the differential benefits of the major service delivery systems for people of color, women, gay and lesbian people, and other populations at risk and the factors related to influencing such differential benefits.
- S505-04** Assess the dilemmas and trade-offs involved in the major issues related to service delivery, such as integration, normalization and privatization.
- S505-05** Assess the nature of power and control in the political and legislative process, the management and control of information by lobbying forces and the positive and negative aspects of social policy practice.
- S505-06** Assess the impact of social and economic policies on the advancement or hindrance of social and environmental justice and human rights.
- S505-07** Evaluate relationships of social work values and ethics to service delivery, policy goals and the political process.
- S505-08** Assess and evaluate how the social constructions of problems relate to poverty, inequality, and systems of stratification, and apply analytic methods in advocating for special population groups, significant social issues and political or legislative goals.
- S505-09** Evaluate the changing nature of individual, group, community and societal policy inter-dependency from a comparative global perspective.

Required Texts

Haynes, K. and Mickelson, J. (2010). *Affecting change: Social workers in the political arena*, (7th ed.). New York, NY: Allyn Bacon.

Karger, H. and Stoesz, D. (2017). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

Course Content

This course equips students to demonstrate ethical and professional behavior and to advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice in and through policy practice.

The major evaluation of students' progress in accomplishing the learning objectives of this course is the signature Policy Analysis Paper, which allows you to demonstrate your learning by utilizing social work values and ethics along with a social work policy analysis framework to analyze a bill and assess its potential impact on social, economic and/or environmental justice along with human rights, clarifying both a grounded social work position regarding the policy and then, in the name of that position, developing a strategy that could be used to build coalition, inclusive of civil society and the political realm, to move the position from paper to reality.

Be mindful that academic and experiential content in social work courses may trigger an emotional response, especially in individuals who have prior trauma history. As social workers, it is our responsibility to be present for clients who have experienced trauma; therefore, it is necessary to cultivate compassionate self-awareness and address our personal histories in a timely manner for competent social work practice. If you are triggered in the classroom, your priority is self-care as well as continuing to gain knowledge for

practice. You may need to seek consultation from faculty as to your readiness for practice and/or how to better prepare for social work practice.

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: Policy Analysis Frameworks

Dates:

Overview

- A. Introduction to the course
- B. Overview of assignments
- C. Technology as a resource to keep current on policy development
- D. How to use policy analysis frameworks

Assignments

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapters 1 & 3 from required text.
2. Browse advocacy links at <http://www.socialworkers.org>
3. Browse iga.in.gov

Module 2: Policies to address poverty

Dates:

Overview

- A. Cash assistance: TANF
- B. Food assistance: SNAP and WIC
- C. Housing assistance: HUD
- D. Theories of why poverty exists

Assignments

Individual Assignment

1. Social Work Speaks Position paper due 9/7

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapters 5, 11, and 17 from required text for 9/7.
2. Wilson, W.J. (2003). Race, class and urban poverty: A rejoinder. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26(6), 1096-1114 from Canvas for 9/14.
3. Mead, L. (1989). The logic of workfare: The underclass and work policy. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 501(1), 156-169 from Canvas for 9/14.

Module 3: Policies to address crime

Dates:

Overview

- A. The juvenile justice system
- B. Competence to stand trial
- C. Theoretical underpinnings of criminal justice policy

Assignments

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 14 from required text.

Module 4: Policies to address health care

Dates:

Overview

- A. Costs of health care in the US
- B. Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP
- C. Affordable Care Act
- D. Recent policy debates

Assignments

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 12 (9/28) and Chapter 13 (10/5)

Module 5: Where and how state policies are set

Date:

Overview

- A. Field trip to the Indiana State House
- B. 200 West Washington St., Indianapolis

Field trip information

Please dress in business or business casual attire.

PLEASE GET THERE EARLY! YOU MUST GO THROUGH SECURITY!

Public entry is available at the following building entrances:

- Upper level east doors, closest to Capitol Ave. and Market St.
- Lower level, west doors, with access from Robert D. Orr Plaza (ADA accessible).
- Visitors will be required to pass through metal detectors, and all bags and packages will be x-rayed and may be subject to further inspection.

Assignments

1. Agency Policy Paper due.

Readings

1. Hamilton, L. (n.d.). You need to understand lobbying. Available at: <http://www.centeroncongress.org/you-need-understand-lobbying>;
2. Carnick, L. (2008). *Practicum II/III: Indiana State Legislature*. Author. This is the final paper from a student who interned with the Indiana State Senate for her practicum (available on Canvas)
3. Indiana State House History at [Indiana Statehouse Tour Office website](#), including the links:
 - A Center of Civic Life
 - In Character with the Parthenon
 - In Clear Arrangement
 - The First One Hundred Years
 - Restoration at its Best
 - A Solid Foundation

Module 6: Policies to address child welfare

Date:

Overview

- A. History of Child Welfare
- B. Development of child abuse and neglect laws
- C. What happens when DCS receives a call
- D. Media coverage of DCS

Assignments

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 15.
2. Kahan, M. (2006). "Put up" on platforms: A history of twentieth-century adoption policy in the United States. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 33(3), 51-72. (available on Canvas)

Module 7: How a bill becomes a law

Date:

Overview

- A. Federal legislative process
- B. Indiana legislative process
- C. PACs
- D. Legislative decision making

Assignments

Readings

1. Hayes and Mickelson, Chapters 1, 2 and 5 from required text.

Module 8: Lobbying and presenting testimony

Date:

Overview

- A. Working as a legislator
- B. The electoral college
- C. Devolution of legislation
- D. Testifying

Assignments

Readings

1. Hayes and Mickelson, Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 10
2. "How to give effective legislative testimony" at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/cg/testify.aspx>

Module 9: American voting system

Date:

Overview

- A. The two-party system
- B. Direct Democracy
- C. Gerrymandering and vote dilution
- D. Campaign finance

Assignments

Readings

1. Karger and Stoesz, Chapters 2 and 4

Module 10: Legislator profile presentations

Dates:

Overview

- A. Please use class time November 16 to complete group presentations
- B. Presentations given November 30

Readings

1. Haynes and Mickelson, Chapters 9, 11 and 12

Module 11: Course wrap up

Date:

Overview

- A. Signature assignment due
- B. Course wrap up discussion

Assignments

- A. Signature assignment due at the beginning of class on Canvas
- B. Professional Participation assignment due the day after class
- C. Peer Evaluations due the day after class

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 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. Social Work Speaks position paper (Group Assignment)
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:10%
2. Agency Policy Paper
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:20%
3. Profile of a legislator presentation (Group Assignment)
 - c. DUE:
 - d. Final Grade Percentage:20%
4. Signature assignment (Individual Assignment)
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:30%
5. Professional Participation (Individual Assignment)
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:10%
6. Peer Evaluations (Individual Assignment)
 - a. DUE:
 - b. Final Grade Percentage:10%

Assignment Details

Social Work Speaks Position Paper

In the first part of this course we consider policies that impact issues pertinent to social workers and the values they serve. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) publishes a policy journal, *Social Work Speaks*, which provides frameworks from which to view these issues and values. For this assignment, you will select a social issue of interest to you and read about it in *Social Works Speaks*. You will write a paper to include the following:

Section One: Personal Opinion

- What is your personal opinion on the social issue?
- What led you to this opinion?

Section Two: NASW's Opinion

- What is NASW's position and how does the organization justify this position?

Section Three: Personal Reflection

- Whether you agreed with the NASW prior to the assignment or not, had reading the position statement on the issue changed your way of thinking? How?
- If you have a conflict with one of NASW's policy statements, how will you handle it in your career as a social worker?

Profile of a Legislator Presentation

The purpose of this assignment is to get to know some of the individuals who create the policies that govern Indiana, and to get a sense of how these individuals make decisions when voting on bills that could have extensive impact on our client base.

Consider the following for your presentation:

1. How did the person get into politics?
2. What is his or her educational and career background?
3. How long has the person been in office?
4. Are they on any committees? If so, which ones?
5. What is the typical process of how the person goes about deciding upon a bill? (Who do they seek input from? How do they educate themselves regarding a bill? How do they measure public opinion?)
6. How much influence does public opinion have upon their decisions?
7. What has been one of the toughest bills they have had to vote upon?
8. Please pay close attention to the *Making Government Policy* module for additional guidance on questions and framing of the interview.
9. Feel free to add additional information you obtain in your research and communication with the legislator.

Agency Policy Paper

A large portion of this course focuses on advocating for policy changes to better the lives of the clients we serve. This paper provides you the opportunity to connect social welfare policy with day-to-day practice. First, you will select an organization that you have access to. You might consider using current/previous practicum placements, your place of employment, or other familiar social service agencies. Second, you will select a policy of the organization. Third, you will analyze the policy.

Section One: Policy Description

- Describe the policy (e.g. what does the policy say, who does it impact, why is it in place).

Section Two: Consequences of the Policy

- Research the intended and unintended consequences of the policy.

Section Three: Strategic Planning

- Develop recommendations for changing the policy to better serve clients
- Create a strategic plan for implementing the changes you suggest.

Policy Analysis Paper (Signature Assignment)

After researching bills that are being or were considered *within the last two legislative sessions* by either the Indiana General Assembly or the United States Congress, select one bill with clear implications for social workers and/or the populations/issues we engage.

In this assignment, writing the paper as if the bill were currently up for consideration, you are to analyze the bill according to the assigned policy analysis framework and then to determine, according to your analysis in light of the Code of Ethics and Social Work Speaks (NASW), whether to support the bill in full, make recommendations for changing portions of the bill, or to oppose the bill altogether.

For State bills, go to [Indiana General Assembly Archive](#). For Federal bills, go to [Congress.gov Legislation Search](#).

The paper is broken into five distinct sections. Please use headings and subheadings to indicate your transitions from one section to another. Remember you should always include a paragraph introduction and conclusion in your academic papers.

Section One: General Information about the Bill

- Provide basic information about the bill (or law) you selected (e.g. title, assigned SB or HB number, current status, and the committee name or members that introduced the bill).

Section Two: Selection Process

- Describe the reason you selected the bill (or law).
- Why is this legislation important to social workers and our clients?
- What are the essential social issues the bill intends to address?
- What is NASW's position and how does the organization justify this position?

Section Three: Policy Analysis

- Utilizing the provided model for policy analysis, examine the goals and potential implications for this legislation:
 1. Describe the policy:
 - For the *description* section of the paper, consider the following subheadings:
 - Historical Background
 - Problem that Necessitated the Policy
 - Policy Description
 2. Analyze the policy:
 - For the *analysis* section of the paper, consider the following subheadings:
 - Goals: Address legality justice and democracy, social equality, redistribution, quality of life, social relations, and social work values.
 - Political Feasibility
 - Economic Feasibility
 - Administrative Feasibility

Section Four: Recommendations

- Address the following:
 - Recommendation:
 - Provide your position (support, opposition, or change), on the bill.
 - If any, what recommendations do you have regarding how this policy issue might be better addressed? How has the past shaped your recommendations for the future?
 - Rationale:
 - Ground your position in social work ethics and values, making sure to cite the Code of Ethics and Social Work Speaks (NASW).
 - Strategy:
 - Describe and justify the types of agencies and organizations that you think would be sympathetic to your position along with possible candidates/legislators for coalition-building. What alliances might be possible?
 - What strategies would you deploy for getting people to “think outside the box” regarding this issue or problem?
 - How do you recommend that you and other social workers advocate to address the policy issues you have identified? Give at least three (3) examples of how you as a social worker can bring about change that will have a positive impact on this issue or problem in the future.

Section Five (Appendix): One-page Brief

- Complete your paper by appending a one page brief that summarizes your position by providing a two or three sentence paragraph that can be comfortably read in ten seconds, and a list of bulleted talking points if you were to provide testimony.

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