SWK-S618 Social Policy and Services (3 cr.)

Course Information

Semester Year:  
Section Number:  
Location:  
Instructor:  
Office:  
Email:  
Phone:  
Office Hours:  

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to develop the competencies necessary to effect policy change for service delivery systems at an organizational, community, and legislative levels. 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" examining closely 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

- 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

S618 – 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.

S618 – 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.

S618 – 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.

S618 – 04  Examine current data and research to analyze social policy issues as well as the impact of federal and state policies on related populations.

S618 – 05  Analyze critically 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.

S618 – 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.

S618 – 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.

S618 – 08  Apply advocacy skills and strategies working in collaboration with community members, groups, and organizations to participate effectively in the legislative process.

S618 – 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.

*For this course, the general objectives apply to the Schools Focus Area.*

**Specific Description and Objectives for the Schools Focus Area**

**Schools Focus Area Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with an intensive study of the relationship of social work values and ethics to social policies and school service delivery systems. Areas explored include learning about values and ethics in regard to role as “social policy practitioner”, political and organizational processes used to influence policy and delivery systems, and practice of policy in school systems to address students’ barriers to achieving educational success.

S618-01  Critically analyze historical and current political perspectives of public school education and educational policies at the local, state, and national levels and their relationship to school social work practice.

S618-02  Demonstrate knowledge of the intersection of political and economic systems as well as prevailing social/cultural norms that impact the accessibility of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all children and adolescents, and particularly those historically marginalized in education settings (e.g., exceptional learners, English Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities, and minority youth).

S618-03  Identify and apply theoretical concepts of macro social work practice in a school environment.

S618-04  Analyze the school community climate and apply tactical self-awareness skills to meet the mental health and social-emotional needs of all students.

S618-05  Generate collaborative school organizational policies and practices to facilitate continuity of care and transitional support for vulnerable youth who are involved with intersecting youth-serving systems.

S618-06  Apply research-informed practice skills to evaluate the efficacy of policies and programs designed to meet the needs of demographics within the school setting.
Identify and evaluate the relationship of social work values and ethics relative to ethical dilemmas in an interdisciplinary school environment.

Identify and implement data-driven, school-wide program planning and evaluation.

Analyze school policies to discern how unintended effects perpetuate educational disparities for historically at-risk student groups.

Apply knowledge of legislation relevant to school social work practice, e.g., disability, 504, special education, and general education interventions (GEI).

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, 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 the learning objectives in this course through a variety of classroom tools including lectures, 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.

*Note that content on special education and 504s is primarily covered in the S618 course.

Required Texts


Additional readings as assigned within the course outline. Note that the course instructor may choose to add readings throughout the course.

Recommended Text


Resources

- Canvas messaging will also be used to communicate between instructor and students. All online communication pertaining to the course should occur through Canvas messaging. Students are
responsible for checking course announcements in the Canvas site for important, time-sensitive information that may emerge throughout the semester. All assignments must be submitted through Canvas.

Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to the Course

Dates:

Overview

A. Introductions
B. Syllabus review
C. Relevant school-based resources

Assignments

1. Online Introduction
2. Acknowledgement of Syllabus Review and Course Orientation

Module 2: Policy Practice in School Social Work: An Overview

Dates:

Overview

A. Indiana Code - Article 4
B. Social Policy Analysis Framework

Readings

1. Massat et al., Chapters 16 & 19
2. Diem & Welton, Chapter 1
3. Indiana Code – Article 4 (pdf in Canvas)

Assignments

1. Online Quiz

Module 3: Schools as Organizations: Implications for Policy Practice

Dates:

Overview

A. Navigating a school’s unique organizational culture
B. Identifying needs and data-driven decision-making
C. Using Tier 1 universal screeners to deliver targeted supports
D. Promoting a positive school culture and climate through Tier 1 interventions

Readings

1. Massat et al., Chapter 18, 21, & 23
2. Diem & Welton, Chapter 8

Dates:

Overview
A. Federal education policy historical context to the present
   - Every Student Succeeds Act
B. State level education policy

Readings
1. Massat et al., Chapter 19 (revisit)
2. Diem & Welton, Chapters 5-6

Assignments
1. Online Quiz
2. School Social Work Role Definition Assignment

Module 5: Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Safe and Supportive Schools: Policy Implications

Dates:

Overview
A. School-based consultation in a multi-tiered system of support
B. School-based mental health supports – suicide and violence prevention from organizational and policy perspective
C. Bullying prevention

Readings
1. Massat et al., Chapters 22 & 24
2. Framework for Safe and Supportive Schools
3. Cops No Counselors: ACLU Report

Assignments
1. Online Quiz
Overview
A. Historical context of civil rights in education policy
B. Advocating for social justice in school settings
C. Neoliberal ideology and the marketization of education
D. Implications of NCLB - High stakes testing and color-evasive education policy-making

Readings
1. Massat et al., Chapter 8, 10, & 17
2. Diem & Welton, Chapters 3-4

Assignments
1. Online Quiz

Module 7: State-level Advocacy with Indiana School Social Work Association

Overview
A. Engage in collaborative advocacy efforts
B. Learn about current education-related policy

Readings
No readings for this class session

Assignments
1. NO online quiz
2. Day at the Statehouse OR Alternative Assignment if not able to attend Day of Action is Advocacy Email – Not required for those in attendance.

Module 8: Education Policy with Families

Overview
A. Student and parent rights and confidentiality
B. Social Work ethics in school settings

Readings
1. Massat et al., Chapter 5, 6 & 27
2. Day, A. (2013). When does Confidentiality become an impediment rather than a pathway to meeting the educational needs of students in the foster care system? (PDF in Canvas)*
4. HIPAA or FERPA: A Primer on Sharing School Health Information in Indiana (2016)

Assignments
1. Online Quiz
2. Signature Assignment Preparation
Module 9: Social, Emotional and Behavioral Wellbeing of School Communities

Overview

A. CASEL - Toward Transformative SEL in our current cultural and political context
B. Policies that promote the behavioral health of all students, educators, and staff
C. Policy practice that affirms and amplifies the social emotional health of students with marginalized social and racial identities

Readings

1. Massat et al., Chapters 30

Assignments

1. Online Quiz

Module 10: Analysis and Advocacy at the School Organization Level

Overview

A. Attend local school board meeting connected to practicum site or place of residence
B. Observe and analyze leadership style, culture, and policy decision-making
C. Critically reflect on implications for students and families, especially those from marginalized identities and communities

Readings


Assignments

1. No Online Quiz
2. School Board of Education Reflection Paper

Module 11: Systematic Racism and Oppression in Discipline Policies

Overview

A. Occurrence and historical context of exclusionary discipline practices in US
B. Culturally responsive alternatives to exclusionary discipline

Readings

2. Diem & Welton, Chapter 7
Assignments

1. Online Quiz
2. Watch “Pushout” Documentary

Module 12: Signature Assignment – Week of Collaboration with Teams
Dates:

Overview

A. Use week to work on Education Policy Brief with Teams

Readings

No readings this week

Assignments

No assignments this week

Module 13: Social Policy in Education: Vulnerable Populations
Dates:

Overview

A. McKinney-Vento Policy Act and students who are homeless
B. Supporting Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments for LGBTQ+ Students

Readings

1. Massat et al., Chapter 12
2. Supporting Safe and Healthy Schools - A Report on Mental Health Professionals & LGBTQ Youth

Assignments

1. Online Quiz

Module 14: Professional Collaboration
Dates:

Overview

A. Present scholarship to class colleagues

Assignments

1. Signature Assignment - Education Policy Brief within a Multi-Tiered Framework Presentation

Assignments and Grading

The Instructor will discuss details or answer any questions related to assignment during the class and individually through Canvas messaging or by appointment.

All assignments should conform to APA style (7th ed.). Assignments must be double spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, carefully edited and proofed, using no smaller than a 12 point font. Professional writing and presentation are grading criteria for all assignments.
*Note that the instructor may choose to modify, add, or remove assignments. Any changes in assignment requirements will be communicated clearly with ample opportunity for student questions and clarification.

**Online Quizzes**

**Total Points:** 80 (10 points each - the lowest grade will be dropped)
**Due Dates:** Throughout semester as indicated in the schedule

Students will take quizzes throughout the semester. The lowest of the 10 grades will be dropped. Quizzes will cover readings and course materials for modules corresponding to each quiz. Quizzes will be taken through Canvas. The quizzes are an individual assignment and should not be done in collaboration with other students. They will be available Monday, 9 am, the week they are due and will remain open until Sunday, 11:59 pm ET. Quizzes will not be re-opened, so students may use the dropped quiz opportunity, described above, should a student miss a scheduled quiz.

**School Social Work Role Definition**

**Total Points:** 15 pts.
**Due date:**

Students will create a one-page hand-out that could be used to communicate to a key decision-maker about the function, purpose, and value of social workers in school settings. Students may use charts, graphics, statistics, etc. to convey the message and demonstrate how anti-oppressive, anti-racist social work skills are unique and promote the educational needs of children and adolescents. Students will cite at least two sources and include those sources on the hand-out. The document should reflect communication that could be provided to a key decision-maker (e.g., superintendent, legislator, school administrator, or community leader). Use color and spacing to create a professional document. Grading is based upon how compelling the message is about school social work roles and functions as well as accuracy and visual appeal of the work. Students should be prepared to share a digital version of their documents with classmates.

**Alternative Assignment for Day at the Statehouse - Advocacy Email to Legislator**

**Total Points:** 10
**Due Date:**

For students who attend the Day at the Statehouse, 10 points is automatically given for this assignment. For those who are not able to attend for valid reasons, this alternative assignment is required. Students will compose an email for a state legislator advocating for an education related bill. Students will identify which legislator(s) to send the advocacy email based upon where the bill is at in the legislative process. The email will provide a succinct message outlining data or professional experiences that outline a rationale for opposing or supporting the bill. Students will submit a copy of the letter through a Canvas assignment tab. The copy of the email will include the email content, the legislator to whom the email is addressed, and a brief rationale as to why the student identified the legislator in her/his/their targeted advocacy action. The student will also include evidence that the email was sent, including date and email address to which it was sent.

**School Board of Education Reflection Paper**

**Total Points:** 20
**Due Date:**
Students will attend a school board meeting at the school where they are doing a practicum placement or in the district where they are a resident. (The instructor will provide alternative options if the student is not able to attend a board meeting based upon these criteria.) The student will do a 2-3 page reflection on the experience. The reflection paper will include the attention to the style of governance, engagement with family and community residents, and the decisions on policies that occurred. The reflection will also consider how any discussions or decisions made might affect students who represent marginalized identities and communities.

Signature Assignment – Education Policy Analysis within a Multi-Tiered Framework

The Signature Assignment will occur in two parts, integrating concepts learned throughout the semester.

At the beginning of the semester, students will work in teams of 4 students and identify an existing education policy to analyze.

Part 1: Signature Assignment Preparation – Identify Policy for Analysis and Provide Relevant History and Background
Total Points: 10
Due Date:

This assignment is intended to assist students with beginning the policy analysis process by identifying a policy relevant to education. Students will work with group members to identify the policy and provide relevant history, background, and the education issue the policy addresses. This assignment should be 1 page and written in bullet points to convey the main points the students have found in her/his/their inquiry process. Students will provide four scholarly references to support this beginning work on the signature assignment. These scholarly references will be written in APA 7th edition formatting.

Part 2: FINAL Presentation
Signature Assignment – Education Policy Brief within a Multi-Tiered Framework
Professional Presentation
Total Points: 50 points
Due Date:

For this assignment, students will do a professional group presentation. Student groups will identify an existing federal or state policy that applies to a PK-12 Indiana school setting. Students groups will analyze the policy and addresses implications for PK-12 students’ equal access to free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The aim of the policy brief presentation is to educate and influence decision makers. Keep in mind that it is critical to know the anticipated readers when developing a policy brief, so particular attention must be directed to the use of language and visual presentation of content. The completed presentation will be visually and professionally appealing to a broad audience. The policy analysis brief presentation will incorporate at least six scholarly references and include existing data to support major assertions. Due to the unique structure of the policy brief, APA will only be required for formatting references. The policy analysis presentation will incorporate all the following components:

- Identify and outline the policy being analyzed
- Describe any relevant history and background of the policy, including past and current policies that have impacted the issue the policy is seeking to address.
• Provide research-informed evidence that informs the policy analysis and position (Use specific data to support your stance.)
• Discuss the policy issue from a multi-tiered perspective as it relates to school settings, e.g., system-wide and targeted levels of intervention. Address all three tiers of intervention.
• Include what is working (strengths and opportunities) as well as potential or existing challenges related to the proposed policy position.
• Address implications the policy has on anti-racist, anti-oppressive, culturally responsive practice (Consider how student groups and populations may be unintentionally or intentionally oppressed).
• Summarize your policy position and any relevant recommendations for improving the policy structure and/or implementation based on the overall policy brief.
• Include at least 6 scholarly references, incorporated as in-text citations on slides and in the hand-out as well as list of references.

Each section above must be fully developed. Do not merge sections. For each bullet point, use headings/separate slides to promote organization and clarity of content.

Each team member is to present an equal amount of content. Each group will only need to submit one slide presentation and per group.

Cumulative Final Exam

Total Points: 50
Due Date:

During the final week of the semester, students will take a cumulative final exam. The final exam will draw from course readings, module materials, and concepts related to class activities. The final exam will be open-book and note and will include multiple choice, short answer, and brief essay.

Assignments

1. Online Quizzes (10 quizzes at 10 points each-lowest score dropped)
   a. DUE: ..........................................................Throughout the semester
   b. Total Points: ..................................................90 points

2. School Social Work Role Definition
   a. DUE: ..........................................................
   b. Total Points: ..................................................15 points

3. Day at the Statehouse Attendance or Advocacy Email to a State Legislator
   a. DUE: .......................................................... (Email)
   b. Total Points: ..................................................10 points

4. School Board of Education Reflection Paper
   a. DUE: ..........................................................
   b. Total Points: ..................................................20 points

5. Education Policy Analysis Brief within a Multi-Tiered Framework – Preparation
   a. DUE: ..........................................................
   b. Total Points: ..................................................10 points

5. Education Policy Brief within a Multi-Tiered Framework – FINAL
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. There is a clear distinction between the good and the excellent. We expect 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  

*Note the MSW Program does not assign A+ grades

Course Policies

Assignment

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. If a student needs additional time to complete an assignment, the student should speak with the instructor in advance of the due date. The instructor will be flexible when more time is needed (other than quizzes). When a pattern is apparent, late submissions 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.

Students will not be allowed to take quizzes beyond due dates. Exceptions to this policy may be made if a student encounters exceptional personal circumstances, e.g., pandemic related illness or caregiving responsibilities and/or other personal and health related challenges. Should a student experience an extenuating personal circumstance, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor in a timely manner.

Attendance and participation

Engagement is required for weekly readings, quizzes, and assignments. Should a student encounter any issues disrupting engagement due to exceptional personal reasons or reasons related to the pandemic, the student will contact the instructor to discuss the situation and possible strategies to support the student’s success.

See Canvas for University and School Policies

Bibliography


Argesta, J. (2004). Professional role perceptions of school social workers, psychologists, and


Cole et al. (2013). Creating and advocating for trauma-sensitive schools. Chapters 1 & 2

Trauma and Policy Law Initiative


