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SW 531.01: Methods of Social Policy Analysis

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SW 531: METHODS OF SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS

Fall Semester 2008

Friday, 8:10 - 11:00

JBB 108

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays 12:00pm – 2:00

Prerequisites: MSW 2nd year status, SW 530

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on the foundation policy course (SW 530 - History of Social Policy, Justice and Change) by encouraging students to examine the contemporary context of policy formulation and program implementation. Students are encouraged to critically examine the current political landscape by considering historical antecedents to incremental policy formation on local, statewide, and national levels and to consider how traditional and contemporary theories of human behavior, practice perspectives, and empirical research are considered in policy development. Students have an opportunity to learn skills that promote their capacity to influence legislative leaders, testify before subcommittees, or run for public office and to examine ways to better influence public perception through the media and public events. Policy analysis and advocacy assignments incorporate a social justice framework by challenging students to develop partnerships with the intended beneficiaries of a specific social welfare policy in order to deepen understanding about past oppression, current hegemony, and more respectful possibilities that engage affected communities as partners in change efforts.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

Social Work 531 - Methods of Social Policy Analysis builds on the knowledge gained during the foundation year by providing students with an opportunity to become familiar with contemporary social welfare policies, building on the historical foundation covered in SW 530 - History of Social Policy, Justice and Change. The course readings and assignments also integrate and build on the foundation of knowledge gained from course work on human development, behavior, and diversity, group work, community organizing, and research. Knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum are essential for effective social welfare policy analysis and social justice change efforts.

CONCENTRATION OBJECTIVES THAT RELATE TO THE COURSE

1. Prepare students to apply the principles of integrated practice to work with individuals, families, organizations, and communities. (CO 1)
2. Prepare students to apply practice frameworks that consider the importance of historical, political, and cultural contexts in shaping problems and solutions. (CO 2)
3. Develop students' capacities to conceptualize and implement collaborative partnerships with relevant community, state, and federal organizations. (CO 3)

4. Provide students with opportunities to apply policy analysis frameworks to agency settings and social problems and develop action and/or advocacy plane to effect change. (CO 4)
5. Provide students with opportunities to critically evaluate values and assumptions that underlie particular theoretical frameworks and perspectives and use these assessments to inform and elaborate upon a model of integrated practice. (CO 6)
6. Develop students' capacities to engage in various forms of leadership and engage in leadership styles that promote active participation and voice of community members in addressing needs and concerns. (CO 7)
7. Provide students with opportunities to implement intervention strategies in practice settings based on empirical, theoretical, and experiential knowledge and social work values that address individual and societal problems and propose modifications and innovations. (CO 8)
8. Promote students' capacities to engage diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes that respect differences and promote social and economic justice. (CO 9)
9. Provide students with opportunities to apply research knowledge and derive intervention strategies that are based on understandings of urban and rural communities that enlist the cooperation of organizations and citizen groups in arriving at collaborative decisions. (CO 10)
10. Provide students with opportunities to develop intervention strategies that illustrate understandings of the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination based on gender, ability, race, age, class, and sexual identity that respect difference and the dignity of human life. (CO 11)
11. Provide students with the opportunity to create a professional portfolio that demonstrates knowledge and skills in the application of the principles of integrated practice in response to identified social problems or practice areas. (CO 12)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a problem assessment process that includes the historical, political, and cultural context that the problem lies within.
2. Understand the inherent values that drive social policy development.
3. Apply an array of policy analysis frameworks to a specific state or federal policy.
4. Demonstrate the ability to engage diverse stakeholders in policy decision-making processes.
5. Understand the unique implications of social policy formulated to rural communities typical of Montana and the rocky mountain west.
6. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills needed for professional practice.

REQUIRED READING LIST

Howard J. Karger & David Stoez (2006). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach*, 5th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Ellis, Rodney (2003) *Impacting social policy: A practitioners guide to analysis and action*,

Pacific Grove California: Thompson Brooks Cole

Reserve Readings will be added to the Mansfield Library e-reserve system periodically throughout the semester.

News/Media Sources:

Newspapers: including a local (Montana) source and a national source (you are free to add an international source if you would like)

News Letters/Journals/Periodicals that cover social policy and political issues

Television news programs that cover social policy and political

Given the importance of the range of differing values and ideologies reflected in public opinion and different media sources, you are encouraged to explore both progressive and conservative perspectives. We all have an excellent opportunity to stay informed and to use the information we gather to dialogue with friends, family members, peers, clients, and others about central issues.

OPTIONAL (to buy) READING

Davis, King and Bent-Goodley, Tricia (2004) *The color of social policy, Alexandria VA: CSWE Press*

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Discussion Facilitation of Current Social Policy and Political Issues (10 pts)** Students are required to stay informed about current social policy and political issues. Each student will be responsible for facilitating a small group discussion regarding current social policy and political issues/events that occur throughout the course of the semester. Class discussions should highlight varying viewpoints, underlying values and assumptions, social justice and ethical considerations and possible courses of action. Students should bring a copy of the news article (newspaper, magazine article, or internet news) they plan to discuss for each member of the class. **Discussion facilitation dates will be determined the first day of class.**
- 2. Policy Area Discussion Paper (10 pts)** Identify a policy issue area of interest to you. When selecting your focus, choose an area that can serve as a general topic throughout the course, and ideally, is linked to your area of emphasis for SW 535. Choose a topic that is engaging to you and relevant for your practicum and professional roles. You will be able to develop greater depth and breadth in one particular policy area as you apply analytical frameworks. Review at least two current news articles about your area, one from a conservative news source and the other from a progressive news source. Attach a copy of each article and address the following components in a 4-6 page paper:
 - Provide an overview of your issue area.

- Summarize each article briefly.
- Contrast the values and ideologies about causality and intervention rationales from both sources.
- Note how these views fit with the NASW code of ethics, a social justice framework, and with your own views. **Due Date: September 12**

3. Problem Identification Statement (10 pts) Using the frame work for population and problem identification in Ellis 18-33 build on the policy area and issue you identified in your last assignment and develop a *succinct initial problem statement*. Use whatever worksheets are helpful in Ellis. This might be all of them in sequence, or only some of them or only one. Please show your thinking and your work on how you arrived at your statement. **Due date: September 19**

4. Policy Analysis Paper (25 pts) Identify a specific state or federal social welfare policy in your general interest area. Policies are multifaceted and complex, necessitating an analytical focus on one to two components covered by a law and administrative code. Again, in the selection of a specific policy you are encouraged to choose an area that fits with your area of emphasis for SW535. **Due Date: October 10**

For your analysis, draw from the framework described by Karger and Stoesz (2006), chapter 2 (pp. 25-37). Also please utilize the framework and work sheets provided by Ellis chapters 2-3. Other required readings include additional crucial dimensions and perspectives to consider. You are also encouraged to utilize the social justice themes developed by Finn and Jacobson (2003) in *Just Practice*. You may wish to consider material presented in Davis and Bent-Goodley (2004) *The Color of Social Policy*. You will also need to draw from scholarly works that examine policy development, theoretical foundations, and outcome evaluations that are related to your specific policy focus.

Additional details for this assignment are forthcoming.

4. Policy Analysis Presentation (15 pts) Given the rich diversity of interest and talent in the class as a whole, each student will present highlights from their analytical papers to the class as a whole. Additional details will be provided in class. **Presentations will begin October 10**

5. Integrated Action Proposal (30 pts). As social workers, it is important to consider how to use policy analysis to work toward social justice. This assignment is designed to explore the viewpoints of key stakeholders (clients, line workers, agency administrators, and state or federal staff or legislators) about the policy that has been the focus of your analysis as a basis for informed participatory change. The action plan should include the material presented by Ellis chapters 4-12. And include the following:

- Identify the VIBES (values, interests, beliefs, ethics, and slants) on your policy that are likely to influence decision makers. Are these VIBES polarized? Are there gray areas? Do they run by party-line? (Ellis Chapter 4)
- Interview stakeholders about your policy (clients, line staff, agency administrators, and executive or legislative branch members) and briefly summarize their perspectives. (Ellis Chapter 5)
- Describe a plan to build a partnership with stakeholders, particularly those who are impacted the most (clients, and line staff) to advocate for improvements. Base your proposed strategy and activities on the values and approaches that are most likely to convince a conservative audience. (Ellis Chapter 6)
- Include a brief summary in the form of talking points, legislative testimony, or a letter to a decision maker. (Ellis Chapters 7,8,9)

You are encouraged to consider developing and submitting an IRB proposal for this assignment, since you will be talking with clients, staff, and administrators and may wish to publish your final plan. This is an ethical safeguard and may become the foundation for your SW 521: Evaluation Research project next semester. **Due Date: December 5**

GRADING

Assignment	Points
Discussion Facilitation	10
Policy Area Discussion Paper	10
Problem Identification Statement	10
Policy Analysis Paper	25
Policy Analysis Presentation	15
Integrated Action Proposal	30
Total	100

Percentage	Grade
91-100	A
81-90	B
71-80	C
61-70	D
60 or below	F

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to revision over the course of the semester)

Week 1 August 29 Welcome, Introductions, & Course Overview
 Discussion: Present Policy Challenges & Opportunities

Week 2 September 5 Social Justice & Social Workers; Philosophical Perspectives of Government, Contemporary Politics

Defining Justice, Components of Social Justice, Conceptions of Social Justice; Political Parties & Labels

Read: Karger and Stoesz: Chapter 1 - American Policy and the American Welfare State

Ellis, Chapter 1-Social Policy Definitions and Descriptions

Abramowitz, M. (2001). Everyone is still on welfare: The role of redistribution in social policy. *Social Work*, 46(4), 297-308.

Assignments: Prepare Class Discussion Sheet

Week 3 September 12 Social Welfare Policy and Underlying Values
Values and Beliefs – Cornerstone of Social Welfare
Models of Social Policy Analysis

Read: Karger and Stoesz: Chapter 2 and 3

Ellis, Chapter 2 and 4 (please be my guest if you would like to read chapter 3. It is a historical overview and if you feel you need or want the review it is pretty concise. But it is optional since you will have gotten this material in Karger and Stoesz.)

Assignments: Policy Area Discussion Paper Due
Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 4 September 19 Policy Making and Power
Legislative, Executive and Judicial Power; Lobbying and Special Interests; Campaign Financing; The Media; Propaganda and Persuasion

Read: Karger and Stoesz:
Chapter 8: The Making of Government Policy
Chapter 9: Tax Policy and Income Distribution

Assignments: Problem Identification Statement Prepare Due
Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 5 September 26 Policy Advocacy; Styles of Policy Practice, Skills for Policy Practice

Read: Jansson, B.S. (2008) Obtaining skills and competencies for policy advocacy. *In Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate: From Policy Practice to Social Justice* pp78-108. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education

Ellis: Chapter 5 and 6

Assignments: Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 6 October 3 The Modern Welfare State
Retrenchment and Devolution: Social Allocation; Benefits and Services;
Service Delivery

Read: Karger and Stoesz:
Chapter 6: The Voluntary Sector Today
Chapter 7: Privatization and Human Service Corporations

Ellis: Chapter 7

Assignments: Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 7 October 10 Poverty and Disadvantage
Theories of Poverty; Poverty as a Target of Social Welfare Policy; The
Social Security Act

Read: Karger and Stoesz:
Chapter 4: Discrimination in American Society
Chapter 5: Poverty in America

Assignments: Policy Analysis Paper Due
Policy Analysis Paper Presentations

Week 8 October 17 American Indian Social Welfare and Policy Issues
Field trip to Salish Kootenai College

Read: “The Color of Social Policy: Oppression of Indigenous Tribal Populations and African Americans” Chapter One in *The Color of Social Policy*

Week 9 October. 24 The Social Safety Net: At Risk?

Past and Contemporary Connotations of the Social Safety Net; Welfare Reform

Read: Karger and Stoesz:

Chapter 10: Social Insurance Programs

Chapter 11: Public Assistance Programs

Assignments: Policy Analysis Presentations

Week 10 Oct. 31 Social Security: At Risk? Historical and Contemporary Issues: Is the crisis real? Privatization; Medicare

Read: Karger and Stoesz:

Chapter 10: Social Insurance Programs

Chapter 11: Public Assistance Programs

Assignments: Policy Analysis Presentations

Week 11 Nov. 7 Health Care and Aging

Health Care across the life span; Universal Health Insurance – Can it happen?

Read: Karger and Stoesz:

Chapter 12: The American Health Care System

Assignments: Policy Analysis Presentations

Week 12 Nov. 14 Children's Protections, Family Centered Policy; The Evolution of Children's, Policies and Current Standards

Read: Karger and Stoesz:

Chapter 15: Child Welfare Policies

Policy Analysis Presentations

Chapter 3 "The Color of Child Welfare" Ruth McRoy in King and Bent-Goodley, *The Color of Social Policy*.

Assignments: Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 13 Nov. 21 Housing Policies, Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy

Read: Karger and Stoez 16: Housing Policies

“Policy Implications of domestic Violence for People of Color” Chapter 4 in *The Color of Social Policy*

Assignments: Prepare class discussion sheet

Week 14 November 28 **Thanksgiving Vacation**

Week 15 Dec 5 Hunger and Food Policies
Immigration and International Perspective

Read: Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 17: The Politics of Food Policy and Rural Life

Please review Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 18

Assignment: Prepare class discussion sheet

Final Exam: December 12 (Room assignment TBA)

Assignments: Last day to turn in Integrated Action Proposal

Individual presentations of Policy analysis and Integrated Action Proposal

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Social Work 531: Social Policy Analysis: Policy Analysis Paper Grading Rubric

Section		Max. Points	
Policy Overview	Brief description of the particular social welfare policy		
Historical Background	<p>What historical problems led to the creation of the policy?</p> <p>How important have these problems been historically?</p> <p>How were these problems conceptualized in terms of causality and appropriate interventions?</p> <p>Whose values and views predominated in the policy as constructed?</p> <p>How has the original policy changed over time?</p> <p>What is the legislative history of the policy?</p> <p>What forces were mobilized to support or oppose the policy and what were the central arguments?</p>		
Social Problem	<p>What is the nature of the problem?</p> <p>How widespread is it?</p> <p>How many people are affected by it?</p> <p>Who is affected by it and how?</p> <p>How are the causes conceptualized, and whose view predominates in this definition?</p>		

<p>Policy Description</p>	<p>How is the policy expected to work? What resources or opportunities is the policy expected to provide? Who will be (is) covered by the policy and how? How will the policy be implemented? What are the expected short and long-term goals and intended outcomes of the policy? What are the funding mechanisms for the policy? How will the policy be administered? What agencies will oversee, evaluate and coordinate the policy? What formal criteria will be used to measure the policy's effectiveness? What is the policy's intended duration? What scientific knowledge base forms the foundation for the policy?</p>		
<p>Policy Analysis</p>	<p>Policy Goals: What are the explicit and implicit goals of the policy? What value premises and ideological assumptions underlie these goals? How is the target population viewed in the context of the policy? What social vision does the policy contain? Is the policy designed to foster real social change or only to placate a potentially insurgent group? In whose best interest is the policy? Political Feasibility: Who will support and oppose the policy, and what is the power base of each group? What is public sentiment toward the policy? Economic Feasibility: What is the likelihood of funding and at what levels relative to need? Administrative Feasibility: Can agencies administer the policy given available resources? Is the proposed policy desirable? Does the policy represent a wise use of resources? Are there alternative policies that would be preferable?</p>		

Discussion	<p>Does the policy adequately address the problem?</p> <p>Does the policy enhance social justice?</p> <p>For existing policies, how has the social problem changed as a result?</p> <p>Have there been unintended consequences?</p> <p>For proposed policies, what magnitude of change is likely and what unintended consequences are possible?</p> <p>Do you recommend any changes? Why or why not?</p>		
Citations & References	Cite all references using APA style.		
Technical Merit	Clarity, grammar, organization.		

Additional Comments:

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Social Work 531 Social Policy Analysis: Integrated Action Proposal Grading Rubric

Required plan components:

	Components	Max. Score	Actual Score
1.	Locate and summarize a conservative stance on your policy that is likely to influence decision makers during the next 4 years.		
2.	Interview stakeholders about your policy (clients, line staff, agency administrators, and executive or legislative branch members) and briefly summarize their perspectives.		
3.	Describe a plan to build a partnership with stakeholders, particularly those who are impacted the most (clients, and line staff) to advocate for improvements. Base your proposed strategy and activities on the values and approaches that are most likely to convince a conservative audience.		
4.	Include a brief summary in the form of talking points, legislative testimony, or a letter to a decision maker.		
5.	Technical merit (spelling, grammar, organization), and inclusion of relevant content from course reading (using APA format for citations).		
Total			

Additional Comments: