

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Syllabus: SW516 - Social Welfare Policy and Services  
Fall 2007**

**Code of Conduct:**

It is the student's responsibility to have read the College of Social Work Ethical Academic and Professional Conduct code that is in the College of Social Work MSSW Handbook (<http://www.csw.utk.edu/mssw/>).

**The Honor Statement:**

An essential feature of The University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. (*Hilltopics, 2007*).

**Disability:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency information to share, please contact the University of Tennessee Office of Disability Services at 191 Hoskins Library (865-974-6087). This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

**Course Description:**

This course establishes a connection between social welfare policy and social work practice. As such, first, the historic foundations of the social work profession with its societal philosophy and mission are taught. Second, theoretical frameworks pertaining to formulation and analysis of social welfare policies are addressed. Current social welfare policies and services as well as the contemporary economic, social, political, and organizational processes, factors and forces shaping these policies are examined within these frameworks. Particular emphasis is put on the development and implementation of policies within organizations and the roles social workers assume as critical thinkers in effecting change. The practice of policy is regarded as a tool to understanding and influencing the policymaking process as it is shaped by various organizational forces and as it effects service delivery. Finally, the history, evolution and current status of social welfare policies and services in the United States are presented and critically analyzed in terms of their responsiveness to the needs of the society in general and to the needs of vulnerable, high risk groups in particular, within the principles of equality, social and economic justice and fairness, non-discrimination, and cultural diversity. Professional self-development for competent policy practice is emphasized. Influence of social policy on the holistic health and well-being of individuals, society, and social work practice is acknowledged.

**Course Rationale:**

This course is one of three foundation courses, along with Social Work Practice III and Human Behavior and Social Environment II, providing the students with the knowledge about, and orientation to, the integration of macro theories and practices into the designs and functioning of social welfare policies, programs, and services. Through their participation in this course, students appreciate and learn the place and influence of social welfare policies and services in the society and make professional use of them for the attainment, maintenance and/or enhancement of the quality of health and well-being of their clients.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities, assignments and/or exams):

1. Knowledge of history, mission and philosophy of the social work profession in the context of social policies guiding us into the second millennium and twenty-first century;
2. Knowledge of history and nature of social welfare policies and services and their effects on the social work profession and human service agencies;
3. Knowledge of social problems as constructions of social realities; their definitions, evolutions, and resolutions;
4. Knowledge of the roles of societal and professional values, ethics and self development in policy formulation and analysis;
5. Knowledge of frameworks for critical thinking, problem-solving, policy formulation, and policy analysis;
6. Knowledge of current social welfare policies and the organization and structure of systems developed to deliver related services;
7. Knowledge of the political and organizational processes and actions to influence policy making, analysis, advocacy, empowerment, and policy practice;
8. Knowledge of relationships between social welfare policies and social and economic justice as well as the institutional forms of discrimination, oppression, and social control;
9. Knowledge of the significance of human diversity in shaping and analyzing policy as it relates to professionally and culturally competent practice;
10. Skill in constructing historical and current socioeconomic contexts within which social welfare policies are analyzed and designed;
11. Skill in assessing and defining social problems addressed by social welfare policies; formulating and analyzing social welfare policies;
12. Skill in identifying, clarifying and interpreting values and professional ethical standards, and applying them to the formulation and analysis of social welfare policies;
13. Skill in identifying and using critical thinking and the theoretical frameworks in the formulation and analysis of social welfare policies;
14. Skill in applying social and economic justice concepts and principles to the formulation and analysis of social welfare policies;
15. Skill in determining intended and unintended effects of policies on both majority and minority populations of color, women, gays, lesbians, the poor, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable, high risk populations;
16. Skill in advocating, empowerment and policy practice.