

The Social Policy of North America

US: The University of Tennessee and University of South Florida

Canada: Universite de Montreal and University of Calgary

Mexico: Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon and Universidad de Colima
Spring, 2009

Course number

The University of Tennessee: SW 550

Section 004- 2 credit hours

Instructor(s) Rodney A. Ellis, Ph.D., CMSW

Office hours: Monday evenings 6:00-9:00 PM in text chat room on Blackboard or as arranged.

Teaching participants

Teaching participants are members of the faculty at the partner universities listed at the top of the page. They are listed as teaching participants rather than instructors because they will not be present for every class session and activity. Instead, they will appear on the site periodically to handle specific sections of the course or to participate in specific activities. They are faculty and their comments and instructions should be given equal weight to those of the instructor(s).

Dr. Karen Sowers, Ph.D

Dr. William Rowe, D.S.W.

Dr. Jackie Sieppert, Ph.D.

Dr. Maria Elena Ramos Tovar, Ph.D.

Dra. Marie LaCroix, Ph.D.

Dra. Maria Theresa Quinto, Ph.D.

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

(www.csw.utk.edu)

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*, 2008).

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, 2227 Dunford Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-4020, 865-974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a concentration elective course. This course is intended to prepare students for internship experiences and post-graduation professional practice in and across the countries of North America. The course utilizes the process of critical thinking to locate, and examine best evidence for practice and policy decisions in policy creation and the delivery systems of Canada, Mexico, and the United States, as well as the cultural factors that both influence and are influenced by policies. The course includes common social problems of the countries, and comparison, and contrasting social welfare policy in each country that are intended to address them, including NAFTA and its differential effects across the participating countries.

COURSE RATIONALE

The world is changing. Internationalization and globalization are shrinking continents and opening borders. Partnerships such as the European Union and the proposed North American Union are changing the way their participants interact and are transforming the global economy. In the wake of these initiatives, as well as that of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), it is increasingly important that social workers understand the social problems and service systems of North America, as well as its cultures. Further, students must understand how to implement policy analysis and action in an international environment, and have an understanding of comparative policy analysis to be effective.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

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

1. Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America. (Practice c.3; Policy c.3) (Content: macro theories; organizational theory; economics, taxation, redistribution of wealth).
2. Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, *and the* recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice. (Values/Ethics c.2; Practice c. 2) (Content: the use of technology and its implications, privatization, International Code of Ethics, application of ethical principles in diverse settings).
3. Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and

adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers. Research Conc. #3; Diversity Conc. #1; CT/EBP Conc. #1, #3. (*Content: identification and implementation of effective techniques of assessment and intervention, cultural sensitivity and competence, application of critical thinking*).

4. Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds. Policy Conc. #3; Practice Conc. #3. (*Content: social work models in various countries, exemplars of micro-enterprise, empowerment, alternative approaches to social and economic development in various settings and countries, brainstorming, nominal group technique, cross-cultural communication*)
5. Planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques/ Practice Conc. #3; Populations at risk & SJ Conc. #2. (*Content: community development models; asset building, wealth and effective psycho-education within communities*).
6. Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources. Diversity Conc. #3; Populations at risk & SJ Conc. #1. (*Content: policy development; mechanisms for evaluating effectiveness, forecasting, etc. social and economic planning and intervention, asset building*).
7. Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies. Diversity Conc. #4; Values/ethics Conc. #3. (*Content: identity formation; experiences of individuals in these contexts; formation of multiple cultural identities; history of cultural insensitivity in research; generalization of research findings to other groups; issues in international policy analysis and research*).

REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS

No books are required for this class. Instead, **Weekly Worksheets** will be posted on Blackboard. The **Weekly Worksheets** will consist of a narrative and a series of questions about the content of the narrative. Each narrative will include several urls of web pages that students will need to visit in order to read text or view videos. Information gleaned from the narratives and web pages will be used in order to complete the narrative that follows each Worksheet.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE AND BLACKBOARD

This course will be taught entirely online. There will be NO SCHEDULED CLASS SESSIONS. Students will need to decide what grade they want to earn and will submit the required number of assignments in order to earn that grade. The section below entitled “Required Activities” describes what kinds of projects must be completed in order to earn each grade. This process is known as “contracting for a grade”.

Please note: The assignments must be completed at an acceptable level in order to count toward the grade. Each assignment will, therefore, receive a satisfactory or unsatisfactory grade. Satisfactory completion of every assignment required for a specific grade will result in the student receiving that grade. Failure to complete an assignment or assignments satisfactorily will result in failure of the course. Students who submit an unsatisfactory assignment will have one opportunity to bring that assignment up to a satisfactory level.

Also please note: You MUST submit a written contract specifying which grade you wish to receive by January 28, 2009. Please do NOT post your desired grade on the discussion board. Please submit it directly to the instructor through the Digital Drop Box in Blackboard.

All materials for this course are either posted on Blackboard or available through the urls included in each narrative. This includes the **Weekly Worksheets** required for the weekly readings, as well as the materials and instructions for the projects required to earn a B+ or an A. The only exception occurs in assignments where students are encouraged to search the Web for specific materials. Students are also encouraged to supplement and enhance their education with additional resources.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Required activities

Project 1- In order to earn a “B”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily 1) read the **Weekly Worksheet** identified in the syllabus each week. They must also complete and submit the questions that constitute the second half of each **Weekly Worksheet** through the Digital Dropbox and post relevant comments on the Discussion Board. Please note: weekly posts to the Discussion Board are mandatory. Students MUST read the Discussion Board and post regularly. The Discussion Board will also be a primary means of communication between the instructor and the students, so students will find regular reading there to be critical to their success. All **Weekly Worksheets** and Discussion Board posts must be completed according to the schedule listed in the Course Outline below.

Project 2- In order to earn a “B+”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities identified in Project 1 (contract for a “B”) AND must complete a brief (4-5 page) paper describing the outcomes of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Guidelines for the paper are provided in the Course Documents section of Blackboard.

Project 3- In order to earn an “A”- Students must successfully and satisfactorily complete all the activities described in both Project 1 (contract for an B) and Project 2 (contract for a B+) AND must complete a brief (4-5 page) Comparative Policy Analysis paper. Guidelines for the

paper are provided in the Course Documents section of Blackboard.

Assignment Criteria

Specific competencies students will acquire through successful completion of this course were listed earlier in this syllabus. Outcomes for each of these competencies are addressed through the Weekly Worksheets and are described for each Weekly Worksheet in the Course Outline below. Outcomes for the NAFTA Paper and Comparative Policy Analysis Paper are described in this section.

1. NAFTA Paper 4-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, written in APA style (necessary for a B+)

The NAFTA paper will provide a summary of the history of development of the North American Trade Agreement, an understanding of its provisions, and an overview of its outcomes for specific groups across the continent of North America. Competencies addressed include

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, *and the* recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

2. Comparative Policy Analysis Paper 4-5 pages, double-spaced, written in APA style (necessary for an A)

The Comparative Policy Analysis paper will require students to use basic techniques of comparative policy analysis (taught through the worksheets) to analyze the policy area of their choice as it exists in each of the three countries. Competencies addressed include:

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community,

gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

Class policies

1. Students are expected to complete assignments in a timely manner and post on discussion boards regularly.
2. Incompletes will be given only according to the rules specified in the written policies of the student's home university.
3. All written assignments are due at midnight on the day specified in the course outline. Assignments received after that time will be marked down significantly.
4. Cheating and/or plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the disciplinary procedures outlined in their university's student policies.
5. University policy regarding religious holidays will be observed. Any student may request to be excused from class to observe a religious day from his/her faith. No examinations or required work will be due on a religious holiday.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit I: Structure of the Policymaking Systems of North America

Week 1- January 14, 2008 - Open house on the website.

Students should visit the website, read the first announcement, and follow the instructions there. Based on the instructions they find there they will participate in a self-lead tour of the parts of the website that will be used during the semester.

Introduction of class members and faculty (Discussion board)
Introduction of the course (See instructions under "Announcements")
Tour of the website
Readings for next week: The Government of Mexico

Week 2- January 21, 2008 - The Government in Mexico

Worksheets for "The Government of Mexico" due
Discussion board entries on "The Government of Mexico" due
Readings for next week: The Government of Canada"

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

Week 3- January 28, 2008 - The Government in Canada

Worksheets for “The Government of Canada” due
Discussion board entries on “The Government of Canada” due
Readings for next week: The Government of the United States

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

Week 4- February 4, 2008 - The Government in the US

Worksheets for “The Government of the United States” due
Discussion board entries on “The Government of the United States” due
Readings for next week: The Components and Characteristics of Culture

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

Unit II: Cultural Assumptions about Social Policy

Week 5- February 11, 2008 - The Components and Characteristics of Culture

Summary of Unit I and Introduction to Unit II
Worksheets for “The Components and Characteristics of Culture” due

Discussion board entries on “The Components and Characteristics of Culture”
Readings for next week: “Culture-related Assumptions and Nuances in Policy

Competencies included:

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, *and the* recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Analysis of the influence and implications of cultural, geographic, community, gender-based, religious, political, ideological, and other ways of interacting and thinking about social issues, concerns, ethics and values in the context of international policies.

Week 6- February 18, 2008 - Culture-related Assumptions and Nuances in Policy

Worksheets for Culture-related Assumptions and Nuances in Policy due
Discussion board entries on “Culture-related Assumptions and Nuances in Policy” due
Readings for next week: Common Policy Issues across North America

Competencies included:

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, *and the* recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds

Unit III: Comparison of Policy Areas Among the Countries

Week 7- February 25, 2008 - Common Policy Issues Across North America

Summary of Unit II and Introduction to Unit III
Worksheets for “Common Policy Issues across North America” due

Discussion board entries on “Common Policy Issues across North America” due
Readings for next week: Differences in Perspectives of and Approaches to Social Problems

Competencies included:

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, *and the* recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Week 8- March 4, 2008 - Differences in Perspectives of and Approaches to Social Problems

Worksheets for “Differences in Perspectives of and Approaches to Social Problems” due
Discussion board entries on “Differences in Perspectives of and Approaches to Social Problems” due

Readings for next week: Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Canada

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, and the recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Unit IV: Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Each Country

Week 9- March 11, 2008- Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Canada

Summary of Unit III and Introduction to Unit IV

Worksheets for “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Canada” due

Discussion board entries on “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Canada” due

Readings for next week: Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Mexico

Competencies included:

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Week 10- March 18, 2008 – Spring Break

Week 11- March 25, 2008- Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Mexico

Worksheets for “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Mexico” due

Discussion board entries on “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in Mexico” due

Readings for next week: Structure of the Policy Delivery System in the United States

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented

group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Week 12- April 1, 2008 - Structure of the Policy Delivery System in the US

Worksheets for “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in the US” due
Discussion board entries on “Structure of the Policy Delivery System in the US” due
Readings for next week: Funding Sources within Each Country

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Unit V: Funding Social Programs in North America

Week 13- April 8, 2008- Funding Sources within Each Country

Summary of Unit IV and Introduction to Unit V

Worksheets for “Funding Sources Within Each Country” due

Discussion board entries on “Funding Sources within Each Country” due

Readings for next week: International Funding and NAFTA: History, Provisions, and Results

Competencies included:

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Week 14- April 15, 2008 – International Funding and NAFTA

Worksheets for “International Funding” due

Worksheets for NAFTA due

Discussion board entries on “Funding Sources across the Countries” and NAFTA due

Readings for next week: Principles of Comparative Policy Analysis

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, and the recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across

cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

5- Demonstration of planning and implementation skills for employing evidenced-based strategies in policy practice, including the use of: participatory practice methods, capacity building, consciousness-raising and population education techniques.

6- Articulation of social change strategies that focus on local, nation, and international populations-at-risk to promote social and economic justice, combat discrimination and oppression, and increase access to resources.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

Unit VI: Comparative Policy Analysis across North America

Week 15- April 22, 2008 – Final assignments due

NAFTA paper due (Contracts for B+)

CPA readings and paper due

CPA Worksheets due

Discussion board posts on Comparative Policy Analysis due

CPA paper due (Contracts for A)

Competencies included:

1- Evaluation of the history and philosophy of various theories and models of policy development, policy analysis, policy advocacy, and other forms of policy practice across the three countries of North America.

2- Identification of issues in social welfare policy in North America, including the digital divide between and within nations, privatization of services, globalization and decentralization of decision-making, and the recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas that occur in international policy practice.

3- Identification of evidenced-based approaches to policy practice in such areas as needs assessment, policy analysis, applying the steps of critical thinking, understanding, and adapting to cultural issues and differences, and addressing discrimination and oppression across cultures, across systems, and across geographical barriers.

4- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models

of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.

7- Identification and evaluation of examples of both national and international models of policy intervention including democratic participatory approaches and empowerment oriented group decision-making models in both the developed and the developing worlds.