THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK
BSSW Program

SW 416 – Social Welfare Policies and Issues

FALL 2015 (3 credit hours)

Instructor: Dr. S. L. Bowie, Associate Professor
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Class Time: Tue/Thur, 9:40-10:55
Class Location: 322 Henson Hall
Office Hours: Thur, 11:30-12:15, and by appt.

Catalogue Description:
Policy formation processes, policymakers in systems, and policy-related role expectations. Emphasis on utilizing and analytical framework and social change efforts. Progression or consent of instructor required.

Extended Description:
In this course we will emphasize a major function of social work practice, “contribution to the development and modification of social policy.” Policy -- be it made by legislative bodies (federal, state, local), executives or government, judicial decisions, public administrative agencies, professional associations, directors and practitioners in social resource systems, or consumer groups, has a profound impact on practice in terms of what and how much is available, who the recipients are, and the delivery of social welfare services. As front-line workers, baccalaureate social workers are in a position to encounter dysfunctional policies, to call attention to these problems, to assist those who are in a position to facilitate change, and to formulate policy which is congruent with the mission of the profession. Social welfare policy is a vital concern and a critical part of practice, and if ignored, decisions which impact practice and the social well-being of others can be rendered by those who are ill-informed.

The course assignments, readings, and discussion content will routinely and deliberately place special emphasis on diversity issues in social work and social welfare, populations-at-risk, social and economic justice, and leadership development by social work students and social work practitioners.

Course Objectives:
The objectives of this course are to provide the student opportunities and the environment to understand and analyze:

1. that policy emerges from the influence of values, knowledge and experience;
2. the importance and the relationship of social welfare policy to social work practice;
3. the knowledge and skills necessary to influence, formulate, and evaluate policies that concern generalist social workers;
4. action strategies regarding policies that deny equal treatment and social equity to those assigned to minority status;
5. the importance of utilizing research findings and documentation in proposing policy implementation and reform.
Course Competencies:
By the completion of this course, students are expected to be able to demonstrate the following (through course activities, assignments, and/or exams):

1. Define and discuss social welfare policy, who formulates social welfare policy and why, where social welfare policy is developed, how it is implemented, and how it is evaluated;
2. Discuss the relationship between social welfare policy and baccalaureate social work practice;
3. Identify major systems of resources utilized in generalist practice and specific policies that guide these resources;
4. Discuss stages of policy formulation and identify points of intervention for generalist practitioners;
5. Identify sources of knowledge regarding policies developed in various resource systems;
6. Articulate gaps and/or problems in existing social welfare policies and in social welfare programs;
7. Identify and utilize a framework for policy analysis, as well as actively participate in the policy formulation process;
8. Delineate strategies which are appropriate to baccalaureate level practice that may influence policymakers on behalf of people in need;
9. Articulate the critical elements and issues regarding a specific social welfare or public policy, aggressively research all aspects of the policy, determine its strengths and weaknesses, and defend the policy in a structured, public speaking and debate forum.

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 BSSW Handbook (www.csw.utk.edu). Students also must follow the policies and rules required by their field placement agency. It is the student’s responsibility to have read these documents and demonstrate professional conduct at all times at their field placement and in the classroom.

CSW Standards of Professional Conduct:
There are certain cognitive, emotional and character requirements that students must possess that provide the College of Social Work (CSW) with reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and the professional practice of social work. Students in the CSW are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their year in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom as well as in their practicum.

- **Professional Behavior.** The social work student behaves professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Standards of Conduct (1365-01-.10) as found in the Tennessee Board of Social Work Certification and Licensure General Rules and Regulations, http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1365/1365-01.20100729.pdf

- **Interpersonal Skills.** The social work student communicates and interacts with other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in a professional manner, and demonstrates respect for and consideration of other students, faculty, staff, clients and professionals in spoken, written
and electronic form. The social work student expresses her/his ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and ability to listen to others.

- **Self-awareness.** The social work student is willing to examine and change his/her behavior when it interferes with her/his working with clients and other professionals, and is able to work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.

- **Professional Commitment.** The social work student has a strong commitment to the essential values of social work (the dignity and worth of every individual and her/his right to a just share of the society’s resources). The social work student is knowledgeable about and adheres to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Rules of the Tennessee Board of Social Worker Certification.

- **Self-care.** The social work student recognizes the signs of stress, develops appropriate means of self-care, and seeks supportive resources if necessary.

- **Valuing Diversity.** The social work student appreciates the value of human diversity. Social work students do not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on other students, faculty, staff, clients or professionals. Social work students are willing to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person’s age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system

Except for alleged academic dishonesty, which shall be addressed through the procedures set forth in *Hilltopics*, code of conduct violations will be addressed through the CSW Professional Standards Committee.

**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)*.

**Civility Statement:**
Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: [http://civility.utk.edu/](http://civility.utk.edu/).

**Disability Services:**
If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 100 Dunford Hall at 865-974-6087. This will ensure that you are properly registered for services.
Diversity Statement:
The College of Social Work and the University of Tennessee welcome and honor all people. In accordance with the U.S. Council on Social Work Education and the U.S. National Association of Social Workers, the College of Social Work defines “the dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of multiple factors including” age, class, color, culture, mental or physical disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, immigration status, marital status, national origin, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. The College values intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, and academic freedom and integrity. A person’s diverse life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. The College of Social Work promotes social justice and social change, and strives to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

Inclement Weather:
Class will be cancelled only if the University is closed due to inclement weather. Campus and local radio and TV stations will be notified, so that appropriate announcement may be made. If class is cancelled, any assignments due that day will be due the next time class meets.

INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:

- Demonstrated growth, development, and maturation in critical thinking capacity as it relates to social work practice, social welfare policy, and current national and international events related to social welfare policy;

- Demonstrated ability to effectively work in teams to complete a sophisticated and challenging policy analysis project in a timely manner;

- Demonstrated ability to prepare for and actively engage in high-level, structured discussions and debate regarding past and current social welfare policies and their impact on the public-at-large.

Required Textbook:

Course Structure and Organization of Learning Modules.

The class will meet two days per week (Tuesday and Thursday) for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Most course content and discussion will be guided through interactive lecturettes integrated and guided by Power Point class presentations by the instructor. The Power Point slides will include content from the bibliography of recommended and supplemental readings cited below, as well as content from current scholarly literature and research on policy, policy practice issues, and so forth, and how they relate to the social work profession, and to you as future social work professionals. The bibliography readings are provided for optional use to facilitate course assignments. The Power Point slides will be provided to the class electronically. Students are responsible for knowing the information.
Recommended and Supplemental Reading Bibliography


Class requirements, Assignments, and Grading:

The final grade in the class will be based upon the following criterion and their corresponding grade percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event(s)</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Date/Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>October 13 (Tue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis Term Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>October 22 (Thu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Policy Debate(s)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>November 3 - 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Debate E-Critiques</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 5 - 26</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total = 100%

Attendance Policy:

Students are not expected to miss any classes. The consequences may be the final course grade being lowered one letter grade. Emergencies, illness, accidents and inclement weather do
occur, and you may need to be late or be absent sometime during the semester. The professor must be notified in a timely fashion, and students should be prepared to verify, if requested.

**Major Course Assignments and Examination:**

**Assignment #1: Midterm Examination (30% of Grade)**

**[Course competencies addressed: 1,3,4,6,8]**

*There will be a midterm examination on Tuesday, October 13, 2015.* The examination will consist of materials from assigned readings and from material presented and discussed in class, as well as additional material that may be assigned by the professor. Specifically, the midterm examination will cover readings, class discussions, and other assignments related to the following competencies: (1) definition and discussion of social welfare policy, who formulates social welfare policy and why, where social welfare policy is developed, how it is implemented, and how it is evaluated; (2) discussion of the relationship between social welfare policy and baccalaureate social work practice; (3) Identification of major systems of resources utilized in generalist practice and specific policies that guide these resources; (4) discussion of stages of policy formulation and identification of points of intervention for generalist practitioners; and (7) Identification and application of a framework for policy analysis. Students are strongly urged to keep up with Appropriate PowerPoint summaries to avoid getting too far behind and creating unnecessary stress.

**Assignment #2: Policy Analysis and Intervention Term Paper (30% of Grade)**

**[Course competencies addressed: 1,4,5,6,7]**

Individual students are required to select and evaluate a specific social policy (proposed or existing) involving the needs of a specific vulnerable client population. The policy topic will be assigned by the professor. The policy analysis will be done in accordance with the ANALYSIS model in McGinnis-Dittrich (1994). The ANALYSIS model and term paper specifications will be discussed thoroughly in class, and students will receive written details.

Each student will also develop a policy-related intervention plan and provide an proposal for implementing the plan. The plan must clearly address identified gaps in the existing social policy, anticipated obstacles to the proposed intervention, and an evaluation strategy. The analysis papers are also required to include content on diversity and multiculturalism issues. In other words, how is the policy you are writing about related to, or how might it affect the various “outgroups” discussed in class?

*The policy analysis term paper is due on Thursday, October 22, 2015.* Students will receive detailed assignment specifications in class.

**Assignment #3: Social Welfare Policy Debate (30% of Grade)**

**[Course competencies addressed: 1,2,3,5,6,8,9]**

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Social welfare policies are debated at every level of the U.S. government system. In order to facilitate the critical thinking process and to help understand the dynamics of that process, each student will participate in a social welfare policy debate regarding specific (and controversial) topics of concern to social workers. This exercise will provide students with (1) an understanding of the policy-making process; (2) the opportunity to “debate the issues” relevant to them and the social work profession; (3) a forum to research, analyze, and evaluate specific policies through a group process; and, (4) an opportunity to actively participate in a major public speaking event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Debate Schedule</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Policy Debate Date and Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debate #1</td>
<td>Alpha Debate Team</td>
<td>November 3rd (Tue), Location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate #2</td>
<td>Beta Debate Team</td>
<td>November 5th (Thu), Location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate #3</td>
<td>Delta Debate Team</td>
<td>November 10th (Tue), Location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate #4</td>
<td>Epsilon Debate Team</td>
<td>November 12th (Thu), Location TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate #5</td>
<td>Gamma Debate Team</td>
<td>November 17th (Tue), Location TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate #6</td>
<td>Kappa Debate Team</td>
<td>November 19th (Thu), Location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate #7</td>
<td>Lambda Debate Team</td>
<td>November 24th (Tue), Location TBD</td>
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Policy Debate Format

The debate format used in this exercise is the most widespread form of debate. The debate issues or topics are policy-oriented (for example: “All people who receive welfare benefits should undergo mandatory drug testing.”) Two to three students will take an affirmative position on the topic area (“pro”) and two to three students will take an opposition position (“con”). Individual student grades will be given for the debate. This means that each individual student will be graded for his/her work alone.

Note: The policy debate teams and topics will be assigned by the professor.

Each team will be required to take a firm stand on the issue, explain the logic of their position, use quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (personal or telephonic interviews with experts) data to support their arguments, and help the audience understand why their idea is more reasonable than that of the opponent(s). There is a strict format for the debates that includes specific time limits for presentation of affirmative and negative positions, cross-examinations by opponents, rebuttals, and closing arguments. The audience will also have an opportunity to ask questions, provide written comments to each debate team, and vote their preferences on which team presented the best arguments.

The professor recognizes that some students will be forced to take a position that they do not personally agree with. This is, however, a realistic aspect of social policy dynamics and will provide a valuable perspective on the political complexity of the policy-making process, as well as the role of personal and/or societal values. It will also help to elucidate the ideas of stakeholders, balance of power, out groups, oppression, and environmental influences on social policy.

The debates will be 70** minutes in length, with another 10 minutes allotted for class inquiries and discussion. All debate team members must equally participate in the debate. Any debate
team members who do not actively and equally participate during the debate will receive an individual grade reduction. The specific times allotted will be as follows:

- Affirmative Position Statement/Opening argument: 10 minutes
- Opposition Position Statement/Opening Argument: 10 minutes
- Opposition Cross-Examination: 10 minutes
- Affirmative Cross-Examination: 10 minutes
- Closing Affirmative Arguments: 10 minutes
- Closing Opposition Arguments: 10 minutes
- Audience Questions: 10 minutes

Total Debate Time = 70 minutes

**NOTE:** All debate team members are required to take equal part in either the opening or closing statements, as well as the cross-examinations. **Presentation times may be slightly adjusted if there are more than two members on each debate team.**

Written Policy Debate Outline

Debate teams are required to prepare a written debate outline and submit it to the professor one week prior to the scheduled debate. The outline must include the following information:

1. A clear statement of what your debate objectives are;
2. An outline of your strategy for achieving those objectives, including a summary of information to be presented, questions to be used in the cross-examination, etc. (this should be in numbered or “bullet” format);
3. Definitions of key terms that may have a bearing on your topic (do not assume that the audience is familiar with “specialized” terminology); and
4. A reference list for all documents and/or scholarly literature used for the debates (See APA VI). Each debate team (pro and con) are required to interview an individual or individuals who are knowledgeable about your topic and who can serve as a “legitimate authority” on your topic of interest. The interviews should be used to support your debate position. The interviews should be referenced in “personal communication” format (See APA VI), and NOT in the Reference page(s).

Assignment #4: Policy Debate “E-Critiques:” (10% of grade)

All students are required to conduct “e-critiques” of each of the policy debate teams. Critique guidelines will be provided by the professor to clarify and facilitate the process. E-critiques will be electronically aggregated and forwarded to the respective debate teams through BlackBoard. This process will ensure anonymity of the raters. The E-critiques will rate debate teams on organization, effectiveness, strength of evidence, and quality/effectiveness of opening/closing statements and cross examinations. E-Critiques will be due two days after each policy debate.
Other Policy Debate Specifications:

Diversity and Multi-culturalism Content Requirement
Policy debates are required to include and address content on diversity and multi-culturalism issues related to their topic. For example, how is the debate topic related to, or how might it affect one or more of the ethnic or racial “outgroups” discussed in class? This issue must be addressed in a substantive manner during the debate.

Comparative Perspectives
Comparative and international perspectives are salient in relation to social welfare policy. Both debate teams must incorporate the experiences of another country and another state (other than Tennessee) with respect to the selected policy issue. This should be examined in the context of, “what can be learned about this issue from previous experiences of another country or another state in the U.S.?”. That information should be used to buttress the affirmative or opposition debate positions on the matter.

Policy Debate “Set-Up” Teams
The physical set-up for the policy debates is a vital aspect of the overall experience. It is important, therefore, that the preparation for the 5 consecutive policy debates be as efficient as possible. The five (5) debate teams will be responsible for the physical set-up and logistical implementation of at least one debate by another team. The rule is simple: the team that participates in their scheduled debate is responsible for set-up and management of the subsequent debate. Example: When the Beta Team (#2) debates on November 5, the Alpha Team (#1) will be their set-up crew. For the following debate (November 10), the Beta Team will manage the set-up for the Delta Team.

Set-up areas of responsibility include the following:
- Clock management
- Videotaping
- Debate logistics (e.g., microphone, extension cords, etc.)
- Debate protocol
- Question/Answer facilitation

Set-up teams are responsible for all aspects of managing the debate, and for making sure all equipment is operational, dismantled upon completion of debates, and returned to the instructor’s office. Set-up team members will sign up for the different areas of responsibility and the instructor will be given a copy of the sign-up sheet in advance. Set-up teams must have the room “debate ready” by approximately 9:30 AM, so the debate can begin promptly at 9:45 AM.

Assignment/Exam “Make-Up” Policy
If an assignment is not completed by the deadline date, or an examination is missed, the grade will be recorded as a “0” grade (no points). Make up examinations or assignment extensions will only be considered in cases of verifiable emergencies, and is based on the discretion of the professor.

Grading Scale:
Extra Credit:
Extra Credit - BSWO (3-5 participation points)

It is the BSSW program’s expectation that all social work majors participate in the Bachelor’s Social Work Organization (BSWO). All students, regardless of major, who are enrolled in a social work course or considering a major in social work, are welcome. BSWO meets every Tuesday from 11:10 -12:25 in 322 Henson Hall. This time slot is built into the class schedule as a lab for many social work courses. Given the time of the meetings, students are encouraged to bring their lunch.

BSWO is a student organization that provides an excellent opportunity for leadership development, community and university service, the enhancement of group skills, research opportunities, and socialization. The organization and its activities are viewed as an extension of the BSSW curriculum. Students in this class will have the opportunity to earn 3-5 points added to their course grade by attending and participating in BSWO this semester. Your attendance and participation must be documented. Attendance will be taken at each meeting. To be an active member in BSWO and be eligible for extra credit, students are required to attend at least 7 meetings per semester (officers are required to attend 75% of the meetings each semester) and earn 3 - 5 participation points.

Participation points are earned using the following scale:
• 1 point for attending minimum number of meetings required for membership (see above);
• 1 point for participating in one or more drives;
• 2 points for fundraising participation (one per event);
• 2 points for community service or other participation (one per event)

The BSWO advisor and committee chairs determine criteria for participation in all activities. Students may earn 3 to 5 extra credit points in designated BSSW courses. Points awarded for extra credit equal BSWO participation points for a minimum of 3 and not to exceed 5 points. No points will be awarded for students earning less than 3 participation points.

Students must also submit a one-page, double-spaced statement indicating how BSWO participation relates to one or more of the course competencies. The paper is due to the instructor via email one week prior to the end of class. No other extra credit is available in this class.

(SEMESTER TIMETABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK #</th>
<th>GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS*</th>
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</table>

(*)Subject to modification)
#1, Aug 20
- Student/Instructor Introductions
- Overview of program goals, course syllabus, class protocols, and assignment/grading specifications
- Common human needs and social problems

#2, Aug 25
- Common human needs and social problems, cont.
- Social problem classifications
- Social welfare and social welfare policy, function and definition
  - Public, national, and international policy
- Structure of the federal government and political arena
- Social welfare agencies—Public and Private, non-profit
- Social justice in a diverse American society
- False consciousness and social welfare policy
- Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#3, Sept 1
- Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#4, Sept 8
- American “out groups” and the social welfare paradox
- Deficit and non-deficit perspectives in social welfare policy
- Contextual factors in social welfare policy
- Moral dilemmas in social welfare policy
- The policy formulation process
- Policy formulation models for public and private agencies
- Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#5, Sept 15
- Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#6, Sept 22
- Critical thinking and evidence-based policy research
Sept 24
– Social welfare policy and political “dialectics”
– A model for policy analysis
– Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#7, Sept 29
Oct 1
– Economic dynamics and social welfare policy
– Political ideology and social welfare policy
– Corporate welfare
– Policy practice and advocacy
– Policy in the news

Reading Assignment:
Assigned Weekly PowerPoint Slides

#8, Oct 6
– Reviews of Selected Policies and Issues
  • Universal vs entitlement programs
  • Social Security retirement insurance
  • Unemployment insurance
  • Medicare
  • Older Americans Act
  • Veterans benefits

Oct 8
*** Midterm Exam Review ***

- Debate Team Prep Time (Remaining class time)

#9, Oct 13
*** Tuesday, Oct. 13th -- Midterm Examination ***

Oct 16
** Thursday, October 15 – NO CLASS: FALL BREAK **

#10, Oct 20
Oct 22
– Reviews of Selected Policies and Issues
  • Medicaid
  • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
• General Assistance
• Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
• School Food Program
• Public Housing/Subsidized Rentals

*** Note: Policy analysis Term Papers due, Thursday, Oct 22nd ***

#11, Oct 27

*** Instructor Meetings with Individual Debate Teams ***

Oct 29

*** Instructor/Individual Debate Team Meetings, cont. ***

#12, Nov 3

– Policy Debate #1 – Alpha Team
  Setup Team: Lambda

Nov 5

– Policy Debate #2 – Beta Team
  Setup Team: Alpha

#13 Nov 10

– Policy Debate #3 – Delta Team
  Setup Team: Beta

Nov 12

– Policy Debate #4 – Epsilon Team
  Setup Team: Delta

#14, Nov 17

– Policy Debate #5 – Gamma Team
  Setup Team: Epsilon

Nov 19

– Policy Debate #6 – Kappa Team
  Setup Team: Gamma

#15, Nov 24

– Policy Debate #7 – Lambda Team
  Setup Team: Kappa
#16 Dec 1 (Final Class) – Graduate social work education, MSSW Program opportunities, and implications for careers

— Guest Speaker*