COURSE SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides the student with an understanding of the political processes and systems that affect generalist social work practice and prepares the student for advanced generalist social work practice. The course examines (a) the history and current patterns of provision of social welfare services, (b) the role of social policy in helping or deterring people in the maintenance or attainment of optimal health and well-being, and (c) the effect of policy on social work practice. Students will be taught to analyze current social policy within the social context of historical and contemporary factors that shape policy. The course will also focus on the political and organizational processes used to influence policy, the process of policy formulation, and frameworks for analyzing social policies that impact populations-at-risk in light of principles of social and economic justice. The course will further explore the impact of social programs and social welfare policies on the well-being of individuals, families, societal groups, organizations and communities. The course will look at the special issues raised for rural communities and people with rural lifestyles with regard to social welfare policies and services.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

II. CURRICULUM DESCRIPTION

The MSW program of SFASU features a generalist practice and a single specialization: Advanced Generalist Practice in a Rural Context. Both are defined below.

It is important to note here that the BSW program and the MSW program have developed a shared definition of generalist practice, given below.

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

Briefly, generalist social work practice:

- Is multi-level to include individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Is multi-theory, allowing for the free selection of theories as appropriate.
- Utilizes problem identification and solving focus that follows a problem-solving framework.
- Addresses the complexity of individual, family, group, organizational and community system interactions.
- Requires and integration of awareness, competence, and professional response to issues of values, ethics, diversity, culture, social justice and populations-at-risk.

Advanced generalist practice builds on the generalist practice, incorporating the elements listed above, but characterized by a greater depth, breadth, and autonomy as demonstrated through specialized knowledge across problem areas, populations-at-risk and practice settings, with a greater selection of diverse interactions across practice levels.

Briefly, advanced generalist practice requires:

- The ability to engage and differentially assess complex problems with systems of all sizes, with a variety of advanced assessment skills.
- Specialized evidence-based interventions with systems of all sizes.
- Differential evaluation techniques with systems of all sizes.
- Strategies to advocate for clients and constituencies influenced by rural lifestyles.
- Readiness for leadership in a variety of areas including: program development, coordination and administration; clinical and organizational supervision; policy creation,
reform and implementation; leadership in research development and utilization, particularly in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary practice settings; professional development.

The specialized practice for the MSW program is advanced generalist practice for rural contexts. Theories that describe and predict rural ecological systems and rural strengths, including the incredibly rich interactions, simple and complex, formal and informal, wholesome and debilitating are emphasized. On this basis, the curriculum of the MSW Program emphasizes the ecological systems approach, the strengths perspective, and the social capital and social exchange theories.

Rural context refers to social work practice with people with rural lifestyles and systems of all sizes within and outside of rural communities. There is no single accepted definition of rural. In fact, just as generalist practice in social work draws on multiple theories, generalist practice in rural contexts recognizes the many definitions currently in use and their advantages and disadvantages for research, practice, and advocacy. The School of Social Work at SFA utilizes several of these definitions within the United States and globally including:

*The United States Census Bureau* (urbanized areas, urban clusters, and rural populations); *Office of Management and Budget* (metropolitan, micropolitan, and non-core), *Economic Research Service* (rural urban continuum codes); and *the United Nations* that defines urban and rural according to the census definition for each nation, but suggests a definition of rural areas as having a population of less than 2,000 for international comparisons.

### III. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES - CSWE COMPETENCIES

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

### IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: SLO)
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply ethical decisions-making strategies and concepts of critical thinking. (Competency 1)

2. Apply critical thinking in the application of strategies in practice, research, and policy. (Competency 1)

3. Understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy. (Competency 5)

4. Understand policies are implemented at the federal, state, and local levels. (Competency 5)

5. Describe the history and current structures of social policies and services. (Competency 5)

6. Discuss the role of policy in service delivery. (Competency 5)

7. Describe the role of practice in policy development. (Competency 5)

8. Understand the social worker role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. (Competency 5)

9. Understand the importance of engaging in policy practice to effect change within macro settings. (Competency 5)

10. Recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. (Competency 5)

11. Understand knowledge related to policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. (Competency 5)

12. Demonstrate the knowledge of the dimensions of diversity and difference and the multiple factors that intersect with those dimensions and will demonstrate their knowledge of how the culture of a structure may be changed to be more powerful or privileged and/or may be oppressed, marginalized, or alienated. (Competency 2)

13. Demonstrate knowledge of theories of human need and social justice and strategies that promote human rights and social and economic justice globally. (Competency 3)
14. Demonstrate knowledge related to research methods consistent with advancing the profession and will demonstrate their understanding of the value of practice-informed research and research-informed practice. (Competency 4)

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This online course is conducted through online/didactic presentation of material in which considerable student participation is required. An integral part of the course will involve class dialogue and collaborative learning experiences, demanding the continued development of high standards of personal responsibility. Students are required to actively participate in all class discussions and take significant responsibility as active learners. Course material will be facilitated via presentations, group exercises, video presentations, and structured discussion on social policy and legislation issues.

VI. COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS (per SFA Office of Instructional Technology)

This course will utilize the SFA online product Brightspace by D2L (Desire to Learn) to support the delivery of course content –see SFA Brightspace Support Team for support when necessary. You will need basic skills regarding the use of a word processor and web browser. You must have access to a computer that meets the university’s minimum computer system requirements (for specific details go to http://www.sfasu.edu/sfaonline/consider.asp). Computers are available to you through a number of labs across campus (see www.sfasu.edu or the instructor for details).

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction to Course
- Overview and definitions of rural social welfare policy
- Definitions of social welfare and social services
- Social policy for social, economic and environmental justice
- Grand Challenges of Social Work
- Knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes
- Holistic view of competence
- Inter-professional education and collaboration

**Required Readings:**
*DiNitto, Introduction*
*Additional reading*
*Reamer (2013)*

Week 2 Social Work, Social Work Values and Ethics and Social Policy
- Philosophical perspectives on social welfare
- Social values: the theoretical context
- Ethics in social policy and ethical behavior: global perspectives

**Required Readings:**
Additional reading in class

Week 3 The Policy-Making Process
Rural/urban Social Policy
Policy process at agency, local and state and federal levels
Policy practice methods
Required Readings:
DiNitto, Chs. 1-2

Additional reading

Week 4 The Structure and Purpose of Social Welfare Policy
Residual and institutional conception of social welfare
Human rights
Concept of oppression
Oppression and social welfare
Required Readings
DiNitto, Chs. 3 and 6
Additional reading in class

Week 5 The Structure and Purpose of Social Welfare Policy cont.
Roles and functions of social welfare policy
Social policy and social economic justice
Theory and practice of social welfare policy
Required Readings
DiNitto, Ch. 3

Additional reading

Week 6 Social Policy in Colonial America
The Jacksonian Era's Response to Social Problems
Civil War and Freedmen’s Bureau
Charity Organization Society
Settlement House Movement
Required Readings:
A People’s History of Poverty in America: Retrieved from
http://www.ralphmag.org/FL/poverty-america.html
The Old Poor Law and the Economic Rise of England: Retrieved from
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2govtUmuTSk
Additional reading
Week 7 Social Policy in Colonial America Cont. and The Great Depression
The Emergence of the American Welfare State
Development of Social Institutions in American Society
The progressive era and the emergence of social welfare
The Great Society and War on Poverty
The Era of accountability (1970’s)
The New Federalism (1980’s)
The 1990’s and beyond

Required Readings:
Additional reading
Ratcliff, McKernan, & Finegold (2008).
Fighting Poverty: Retrieved from
Additional reading

Week 8 Spring break

Week 9 Midterm

Week 10 The Great Depression and a New Deal Cont.
The current status of the profession 1970’s - present.
Specialization.
Licensure.
Societal changes.
Generic, generalist and advanced generalist practice.
Rural social work practice

Required Readings:
Social Work Scope of Practice: Retrieved from
http://dhs.texas.gov/socialwork/sw_scope.shtm
Professional Licensing and Certification: Retrieved from
http://dhs.texas.gov/plc/plc_mhresources.shtml#links

Week 11 Social Policy and Social Services: New Deal to Present
Social Insurance Programs
U.S. Health Care Policy
Social Policies for the "Deserving Poor"
Social policies for Poor Families

Required Readings:
DiNitto, Chs. 7-8

Week 12 Social Policy and Social Services: New Deal to Present Cont.
Hungry America: Nutritional Policy and Programs in the U.S.
Voluntary, For-Profit, Public services
Social services for the Mentally Ill, Chemically Dependent, and the Elderly
Racism, Sexism and Social Welfare
Social Work and Social Welfare services in rural areas
Social welfare policies and services in other countries

Required Readings:
DiNitto, Ch. 9-10
Additional reading in class

Week 13 The Concept of Human Diversity
Analysis of factors impacting on special population
Stigma in the American welfare system
Racism and discrimination in the American system
Civil Rights in the New Reform Era
Populations-at-risk and American social welfare
World policy issues: oppressed marginalized populations, human right and social justice, sustainable development.
Diversity and difference

Required Readings
DiNitto, Chs. 11-12
Additional reading

Week 14 Implementing and Evaluating Social Policy
Structure of Policy making in the US
Models of Policy Analysis
Ethical Analysis of Policy
Legislation, Policy and Guidelines
Interpreting agency policies and guidelines
Generalist practice and Policy Analysis
Research, advocacy and Policy Analysis
Analyzing policies in rural areas
Impact of policy and its relationship to social economic justice
Diversity and Policy analysis

Required Readings:
Additional reading in class

Week 15 Video Presentations and Review

Week 16 Final Exam
VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. **Class Participation:** In order for the class to discuss the readings, it is essential for you to read assigned material, to access Brightspace course regularly, and to participate in the online discussions. You are responsible for all material covered and assigned in the syllabus, whether or not you have accessed Brightspace course content.

Cell Phones/Pagers/Electronic Devices (This only applies to face-to-face class): Because such devices are disruptive to the classroom environment, I ask that you refrain from using them during class. I also ask that you either place such devices on silent mode or turn them off during class. Repeated interruptions may result in a deduction of points from the final average.

B. **Readings:** The course outline provides a list of required readings for each week (you will receive a detailed schedule the first full week of class that will outline the readings to be covered each class). Since class content and class discussions are designed to answer questions about the material and expand upon the basic concepts, you are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class. Furthermore, you are expected to be prepared to discuss the information, as evidenced by active participation in the class discussions. For example, you should present well formulated questions and comments that demonstrate prior preparation.

C. **Exams/Quizzes/Exercises:** Two exams are required in this course: a midterm exam and a final exam.

D. **Assignments/Presentations:** Preterm Essay/Term Paper/Class Participation/Video Presentation

GRADING

**GRADING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preterm Essay</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Presentation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400 pts</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADING SCALE:**

A = 360 - 400
B = 320 - 359
C = 280 - 319
*D = 240 - 279
*F = Below 240
*Not applicable as credit toward graduate degree

IX. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process. Definition of Academic Dishonesty Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- using or attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam;
- falsifying or inventing of any information, including citations, on an assignment;
- helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the work of another person;
- submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another source;
- Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university. Procedure for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty a faculty member who has evidence and/or suspects that academic dishonesty has occurred will gather all pertinent information and initiate the following procedure:

1. The faculty member will discuss all evidence of cheating or plagiarism directly with the student(s) involved.
2. After consideration of the explanation provided by the student(s), the faculty member will determine whether academic dishonesty has occurred. The faculty member may consult with the academic unit head and/or dean in making a decision.
3. After a determination of academic dishonesty, the faculty member will inform the academic unit head and submit a Report of Academic Dishonesty with supporting documentation to the office of the dean of the student’s major. This report will become part of the student's record and will remain on file with the dean's office for at least four years even if the student withdraws prior to receiving a grade.
4. For a serious first offense or subsequent offenses, the dean of the student’s major will determine a course of action, which may include dismissal from the university. The dean may refer the case to the college council for review and recommendations before making this determination.

A student's record of academic dishonesty will not be available to faculty members. The purpose of the record is for the dean to track a pattern of academic dishonesty during a student's academic career at Stephen F. Austin State University. Student Appeals A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Academic Appeals by Students (6.3). [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf)
**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (SFA Policy 5.5)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average. Please read the complete policy on grades:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/5.5_course-grades.pdf

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
The MSW Student Handbook and Academic and MSW Professional Integrity Code outline acceptable student behavior. Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct of Conduct (SFA Policy 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, visits to agencies, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed. Please see the following link for the complete policy: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf

**X. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic-accomodation-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf
Preterm Essay

Write a two-page self-reflection paper describing your own thoughts and opinions on social welfare policy. Extract from books of faith and your life experiences, a personal philosophy and a set of principles to support your position (give references). Incorporate into your discussion the concepts of “justice” and “righteousness.” Discuss what a just and rightly-ordered society ought to be like in relation to roles, statuses and resources.

Term Paper & Presentation

Students will submit a term paper and deliver a presentation on that paper. Students will analyze a particular American social welfare policy, including its historical development, eligibility criteria, service provision, delivery, administration and financing (an outline is provided, which must be followed in its entirety). Research will focus on the use of current literature such as refereed journals or reliable websites (excluding ‘.com’ sites) and will reflect the student’s ability to distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge.

The analysis should consider:
- The impact of the policy on diverse client systems
- The advancement human rights and social and economic justice as it relates to targeted populations. The role of the social work (if any) in advocating for the policy and consider ethical issues that will impact the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations.
- The student will take a position on a particular policy area, supporting her/his view with current research and from rural and international perspectives.
- Papers must be typed, double spaced and approximately 14 pages in length. As in all graduate classes, graduate level writing skills are expected. The paper should meet all APA standards. A persuasive presentation is to be delivered in a professional manner.

Suggestions for policy paper/presentation topics include (only one policy per student):
- Housing
- Employment
- Health
- Mental Health
- Food
- Social Insurance
- Education
- Family and Child Welfare
- Transportation
- Aging
- Emergency preparation and services

Term Paper Outline (must follow):
1. **Introduction**—State the selected policy
2. **Approach**—state how the policy is organized and methods used (discuss the structure of the policy)

3. **Need**—State the needs the policy attempts to address

4. **Assessment**—state what is at stake (feasibility; quality; effectiveness). Is the policy meeting the need? Are there conflicts in values? How likely will there be for misinterpretations and misapplications of the policy?
   a. **Values** (efficiency, adequacy, and equity)
      1. **Stakeholder Values** at micro, mezzo, and macro level (first identify who the stakeholders are before and after the policy was enacted) (fraternity, equality, liberty)
      2. **Social Work Values**
   b. **Strengths**
   c. **Weaknesses**
   d. **Intended Consequences**
   e. **Unintended Consequences**

5. **Logistics**—state the effects of implementing the policy and its implications (cost, efficiency, adequacy and goal attainment)

6. **Your Reaction**—discuss your position on policy

7. **Conclusion**

---

**Mid-Term and Final Examination**

The purpose of the mid-term and final exam is to measure the student's ability to integrate class discussions, lectures, presentations, and research; and apply to issues related to social policy and legislation. Critically analyze what you have learned thus far.

No late assignments will be accepted. No incomplete grades will be given for the course without the expressed consent of the professor. Consent must be obtained prior to the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to modify assignments and due dates.
Bibliography and References


Websites:


