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SOCW 512 Social Welfare Policy and Policy Practice 3 units
Wednesdays 9:00AM – 12:00PM Duke 517

University Mission Statement: Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs in higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

MSW Mission Statement: The MSW Program in the Department of Social Work at Azusa Pacific University seeks to develop competent advanced social work practitioners who can integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of social work to advance social justice and provide services to assist individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Grounded in the profession's Code of Ethics and sensitivity to diversity, the MSW Program is committed to excellence in our teaching and scholarship, the integration of faith and learning, the development of professional leadership, and the strengthening of communities in local, national, and international contexts.

Course Description: The course provides an introduction to American social welfare policies, offers a historical overview of political influences on social work practice, and presents different models for political advocacy. Content focuses on political and client advocacy with attention to the relevance of professional ethical standards and faith perspectives to policy practice. *Prerequisite: Admission to MSW Program.*

Student Learning Outcomes: (Each measurable learning outcome is followed by assignment or activity used to assess learning outcome)

Upon successful completion of this course, class participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate abilities to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies at organizational, local, state, national and international levels, with awareness of the relevance of policy to individual and social well-being. (foundation objective 8)
Activities/assignment: group presentation, policy analysis/formulation paper, national advocacy organization paper
2. Understand the relevance of diversity and different forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination to social welfare systems, policies, and

populations-at-risk, and apply policy practice strategies intended to advance social and economic justice. (foundation objective 6)

Activities/assignment: group presentation, policy analysis/formulation paper, national advocacy organization paper, exam questions

3. Understand the historic context of social welfare policies, their relevance to the history of the social work profession, and historic influences on contemporary social welfare structures and issues. (foundation objective 1)
Activities/assignment: policy analysis/formulation paper, national advocacy organization paper, exam questions
4. Explain the relationships of social problems to social policies to social programs and related linkages between micro- and macro-levels of social work practice, including the relationship of professional ethics to policy. (foundation objectives 3, 7, 9) *Activities/assignment: group presentation, policy analysis/formulation paper, national advocacy organization paper, exam questions*
5. Demonstrate abilities to critically examine and articulate ways diverse Christian world views can affect policy development and political perspectives, with attention to relevant ethical, legal, and Constitutional issues. (foundation objective 4) *Activities/assignment: policy analysis/formulation paper, exam questions, group discussions*

Required Textbook and Study Resources:

DiNitto, D., & Cummins, L. (2007). *Social welfare: Politics and public policy* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Jansson, B. (2002). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Other Required Instructional Materials:

Websites of national advocacy organizations

Peer-reviewed journal articles to be assigned

Course Schedule:

1. Social work ethics, values, and social welfare policy: Professional commitments to at-risk populations and the advancement of social and economic justice
2. Histories of social work and social welfare policies; historical and current structures of social welfare services
3. Policy and diversity: Concerns regarding racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination: links between discrimination and lack of access to resources
4. Diverse Christian perspectives on social responsibility, social welfare policy, and political involvement: Ethical, legal and constitutional issues
5. Financial, organizational, administrative, and planning processes used to deliver social services

6. Policy development and implementation at local, state, and national levels; the role of policy in service delivery and practice and the attainment of individual and social well being
7. Knowledge and skills to analyze organizational, local, state, national, and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery; importance of understanding international social welfare policy content & context
8. Poverty-related policies
9. Health care policies
10. Housing policies
11. Nutrition policies and programs in the U.S.
12. Policies intended to serve at-risk populations
13. Child welfare policies
14. Policy practice skills and models for political advocacy involving economic, political, and organizational systems: Joining, organizing, lobbying, and participating in political campaigns
15. Policy practice skills used to influence, formulate, and advocate for policies consistent with social work values: Analyzing, preparing policy change strategies, testifying, following through with policy practice activities

Assignments:

1. *Mid-term and final exam*

2. *Group presentations on local issues: Mock City Council meeting*

In preparation for this assignment students will be required to attend a local city council meeting and submit a one-page summary of their observations. Student groups will include 4-5 members, and will focus on an issue of local concern such as housing, foster care, gang activity, drug use, underage drinking, etc. Students will engage in discussions with local officials, law enforcement, and social service agencies to determine the nature and extent of the local problem, as well as policies in place to address the problem. Three mock city council sessions will be held during class periods; the instructor and other class members will assume roles as council members and the instructor will have prepared questions for class members to ask members of presentation groups. Presentation groups will be organized to follow this format:

- Introductions and descriptions of groups affected by policy
- Identification of issue/problem; description of numbers of people involved, populations affected, effects of oppression and/or discrimination on access to resources, community and individual factors hindering problem resolution
- Secular and faith-related community resources (services, policies, programs) addressing the problem and links between problems, policies, and programs
- Information regarding ways other communities (local, state, national, international) have effectively addressed the issue of concern
- Policy recommendations related to maintaining, enforcing, or changing policies, relevance of recommendations to social and economic justice

3. *Paper describing history and work of national advocacy organization*

For this assignment, students will be required to research the history of a national or international advocacy organization of their choosing (examples may include the Child Welfare League of America, National Alliance on Mental Illness, others), identify the major policies addressed by the organization and possible relationships between the advocacy organization and social service agencies and/or programs, describe organizational relevance and contributions nationally/internationally, analyze organizational activities related to policy, and assess organizational effectiveness. Students will also be required to describe different strategies used by the organization to influence policies and discuss positive and negative aspects of these strategies and their perceived impacts on policy change.

4. *Policy analysis and formulation paper*

As the major course assignment, this assignment will require students to analyze a major federal policy and formulate amendments and/or other changes to the policy to better serve vulnerable populations and advance social and economic justice. Analysis will require a literature review in order for students to describe the history of the policy, the nature of problems the policy is intended to address, how the policy is expected to work, programs and/or agencies charged with implementing the policy, funding mechanisms, criteria used to determine the effectiveness of the policy, and the congruence of the policy with professional social work ethics and values. Students will be asked to formulate policy amendments and to develop other advocacy and social change strategies that enhance policy effectiveness regarding social and economic justice. Students will also discuss the relevance of the policy to Christian world views, and articulate ways religious institutions may influence policy development with attention to relevant ethical, legal, and Constitutional issues.

Evaluation/ Assessment Rationale for Grade Determination:

Mid-term exam:	15%
Final exam:	15%
Group presentation (mock city council meeting):	20%
National advocacy organization paper:	20%
Policy analysis and formulation paper:	30%

Criteria for Letter Grade:

A	=	93-100%	C	=	73-77%
A-	=	90-92%	C-	=	70-72%
B+	=	88-89%	D+	=	68-69%
B	=	83-87%	D	=	63-67%
B-	=	80-82%	D-	=	60-62%
C+	=	78-79%	F	=	below 60%

Course Policies:

Policy on class preparation, attendance, and participation: All assigned readings must be completed prior to class so that students are prepared to fully participate in discussions and exercises. Cell phones should be turned off during class periods and laptops will

only be permitted for students to take notes. The instructor may ask to see the student's screen at any time to assure focus on class material. After two unexcused absences, ten points will be deducted from the student's final point total for each additional unexcused absence. Absences will only be excused with notes from the health center or a physician documenting the time at which medical services were sought. Field emergencies will not justify missed classes or cell phone use during class.

Policy on Exams: Exams must be completed at the assigned times. A late exam may be given to individuals who have an urgent medical excuse or a university petition. In special circumstances a make-up exam may be given with a ten-point deduction. Any evidence of cheating will result in a failing exam grade.

Policy on Late Papers: Five points will be deducted each day a paper is late. Exceptions will be granted only under emergency circumstances, and require written student documentation of the need for an extension and identification of an alternate due date. Computer/printer problems do **not** constitute an acceptable excuse for lateness. Written instructor approval of extension requests is required to avoid point deductions. No credit will be given for assignments turned in following the date identified on an extension request unless further documentation of emergency circumstances can be provided by the student **and** their physician or another emergency service provider.

Policy on E-mailed papers and papers submitted by mail or after-hours: Instructors may choose whether or not to accept e-mailed papers. Students accept all risks related to computer, server, and attachment problems. Papers received by e-mail following the due date are subject to the late paper policy. Likewise, papers submitted by mail or after hours (under the instructor's office door or other locations) require instructor permission and are subject to the late paper policy. Students accept all risks related to delayed mail delivery, custodian actions and other circumstances of misplacement.

Policy on Incompletes: Incompletes will only be assigned in medical emergency situations involving the student or a person with a close personal relationship to the student. Formal, signed documentation from a physician, nurse, or other emergency service provider will be required, and may be faxed if necessary. Both student and instructor must also fully complete and sign a contract for incomplete grade assignments; this may also be done by fax if necessary. Both formal documentation of the emergency situation and the contract must be provided by the date the final assignment is due for the student to receive an incomplete. If signed documents are not received, then the student will be graded according to assignments previously completed in the course. Assignments of failing grades will be permanent. In order to avoid this situation, students are strongly encouraged to complete assignments well in advance of due dates.

Policies on Alternative Assignments and Extra Credit: In unique circumstances, instructors may contract with students to complete alternative assignments. Such circumstances will typically focus on specific student interests and opportunities unlikely to be shared by other class members. Alternative assignments require instructor-student contracts to assure that relevant learning objectives will be met. Instructors may also

offer extra credit opportunities for all class members, and are responsible for clearly communicating expectations and the amount of credit students may anticipate receiving.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: An incident of academic dishonesty may result in grade reduction for the assignment, an F for the course, or more serious penalties depending upon the severity of the transgression. Academic dishonesty includes:

1. Cheating- intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
2. Fabrication- intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
3. Facilitating academic dishonesty- intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.
4. Plagiarism- intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Policy on Disability/Special Needs:

Any student in this course who has a disability that might prevent her/him from fully demonstrating her/his abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification, and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure his/her full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

Bibliography

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Partial Annotated List of Journals

Prepared by Dr. Bob Plotnick, University of Washington
(copied with permission)

Journal of Policy Analysis and Management: (JPAM) sponsored by the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, wide variety of issues and methodological approaches, deals with public policy, implementation and management issues

Policy Studies Journal and Policy Studies Review: same sort of journals as JPAM; cover wide range of policy issues, quality of analysis usually weaker than JPAM

Journal of Public Policy: more European focus than JPAM

The American Prospect: well written, provocative, non-technical, articles on wide range of policy issues from a liberal perspective, articles not well documented

The Public Interest: similar type of articles as in *The American Prospect*, but neo-conservative perspective in general

Social Service Review: best social work journal for policy articles

Feminist Economics: journal bringing feminist theory and issues to economic analysis, many articles address social welfare issues

Journal of Marriage and the Family: articles on issues related to poverty policy

American Sociological Review and *American Journal of Sociology*: top 2 journals in this discipline, some articles address social welfare policies and/or social behaviors related to major social welfare policy issues (e.g. discrimination, labor market processes, family behaviors)

Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare: publishes special issues devoted to social welfare policy topics

Public Welfare: short, non-technical pieces on welfare policy and administrative issues, more for agency administrators than scholars; good source of current information

Journal of Aging and Social Policy: articles on all aspects of policy affecting the elderly

Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law: very good on health policy issues, mix of empirical analyses and broader policy essays

Health Affairs: good source of information on current health policy issues, similar in scope to above journal but articles tend to be shorter