

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Welfare Policy and Practice  
42:143; Fall 200-  
302 North Hall  
Tuesday 2-5 p.m.

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to understand basic social welfare policies and programs. The course emphasizes (1) the economic, social, ideological, and political conditions which have historically influenced the formation and implementation of social policy, and (2) the current structure of major social welfare policies in the United States.

We will examine the development and operation of social welfare policies and programs, including income maintenance (welfare), child welfare (foster care and adoption), mental health, health, housing, civil rights, and **old age policies**. Students are introduced to current policy debates to inform their understanding of the relative efficacy, strengths and limitations of various policies, as well as insight into potential reform.

### GOALS AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES:

#### A. Goals of the Course:

1. To understand how socio-economic and political conditions have contributed to the historic evolution of fundamental social welfare programs and their current structures.
2. To understand the roots of the social work profession and how social work has influenced social and political change.
3. To understand how one's value system affects one's conception of various contemporary policy issues such as welfare reform, health care, child and family well being, **public care for elders**, and human rights.
4. To assess the differential impact of social welfare policies on diverse groups, including people of color, women, poor people, **elders**, and other populations at risk.
5. To understand how social work ethics and values relate to social policy decision-making and social policy structures.
6. To understand the structure of current social welfare policies and programs.

#### B. Academic Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the major features of the major social policies and how those policies affect diverse client populations, social workers, and social work agencies.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of how policy-making evolves from a mix of traditions, value systems, economic dynamics, and a balance of political forces.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how social welfare policies are a response to basic social problems at the societal level.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical roots of the social work profession.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how social policies can be used to promote social and economic justice.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of research and evaluation in developing effective policies.

## Course Requirements and Grading

Students will be expected to have completed the assigned readings for each class and to participate in class discussions. The final grade for the course will be based on your performance on a midterm exam (30%), final exam (35%), Free Lunch paper (5%), **Elder Care paper (5%)**, and quizzes (25%).

## REQUIRED READING

Textbook (for sale at the University Bookstore at the Iowa Memorial Union):

Popple, Philip R., and Leslie Leighninger (2000), *Social Work, Social Welfare, and American Society*, 4th ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Chapters and articles (can be checked out for 2-hour intervals from the main Social Work office (308 NH) or from the reserve desk at the main library (first floor, south-west end of building)):

Garfinkel, Irwin (1992). *Assuring Child Support: An Extension of Social Security*. New York: Russell Sage, chapters 1-3.

Jencks, Christopher (1994). *The Homeless*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, chapters 1-2,11.

Kamerman, Sheila B., and Alfred J. Kahn (1995). *Starting Right: How America Neglects Its Youngest Children and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Oxford University Press, chapter 4.

## RECOMMENDED READING

Ellwood, David T. (1988). *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family*. New York: Basic Books.

Moskos, Charles C., and John S. Butler (1996). *Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way*, NY: Basic Books.

Yinger, John (1995). *Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost: The Continuing Costs of Housing Discrimination*. New York: Russell Sage.

## UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL POLICIES

### A. Students with disabilities

Federal law requires that the university make reasonable efforts to accommodate students with disabilities. The student is responsible for arranging accommodations. A student with a disability will bring to the instructor a confidential form available from and signed by a counselor in the Office of Student Disability Services, verifying the need for accommodation. If the student and instructor disagree on how course requirements may be altered without compromising the integrity of the course, the student will contact the Director of the School. The Director will work with the student, the instructor, and the Office of Student Disability Services to resolve such differences. Questions may be addressed to the Office of Student Disability Services, 335-1462.

### B. Resources for obtaining additional help

The school provides support and assistance to students who, for a variety of reasons, may be experiencing academic problems. Such students should speak with the Graduate Coordinator or the director of the school.

### C. Student grievances

A student wishing to grieve a grade should discuss the matter with the instructor. If the grievance is not resolved, students should use the school's appeal process as described in the school's student handbook (Appeals Committee). In the event that the grievance still has not been resolved, the student should send a letter describing the grievance to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, who attempts to resolve the matter. The Associate Dean changes a grade only if it was assigned in violation of college or university policy and only after consultation with the school's director.

### D. Academic misconduct

An incident of academic dishonesty will result in a reduction of the student's grade for the course, at minimum, or a failing grade, depending upon the severity of the transgression. Graduate student's misconduct will also be reported to the Graduate Coordinator, at which point further disciplinary action may be taken. Please refer to the *Educational Handbook for the Master of Social Work Program*.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Aug. 22**      **Introduction**
- Aug. 29**      **Social welfare: Basic concepts**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapters 1 & 2
- Sept. 3**      **History of social welfare**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapters 3 (pp. 56-79), 4 (pp. 116-124) & 8 (pp. 240-263)
- Sept. 12**     **Civil rights policy**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapter 4 (pp. 96-109, 117-125)
- Sept. 19**     **Definition and measurement of poverty**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapter 6
- Sept. 26**     **Causes of poverty**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapter 7
- Oct. 3**      **Welfare policy**  
Poppo & Leighninger, chapter 8 (pp. 228-9, 249-259)
- Oct. 10**     **Alternatives to welfare**  
Kamerman & Kahn, *Starting Right*;  
Garfinkel, *Assuring Child Support*.
- Oct. 17**     **Midterm Exam**

- Oct. 24**      **Child welfare policy**  
Pople & Leighninger, chapter 9
- Oct. 31**      **Aging Policy**  
Pople & Leighninger, chapter 15
- Nov. 7**        **Policies for people with disabilities**  
Pople & Leighninger, chapter 11
- Nov. 14**      **Health care policy**  
Pople & Leighninger, chapter 12
- Nov. 21**      **Housing policy**  
Pople & Leighninger, chapter 14  
**Due: Elder Care Paper**
- Nov. 28**      **Homelessness**  
Jencks, *The Homeless*, Chapters 1, 2 & 11
- Dec. 5**        **Final Exam**

## Free Lunch Assignment

This assignment is intended to give you an opportunity to meet some people who are living in poverty, to learn about the Free Lunch Program in Iowa City, and to think about their policies. The program provides noon meals to one hundred or more people each day, Monday-Saturday from 12-1 at Wesley House, 120 N. Dubuque (next to the Methodist Church, between Handimart and downtown) on the lower level.

You will go and eat there, observe what you can, and talk to people. Your goal is to learn what you can about them and get to know them a little bit. Sit with people you don't know. You will write a short, 2-3-page paper about what you learned – see outline below. You will sign up for the day you will go to ensure that we don't have more than one student there on any one day. Do not take notes during the meal. Sit down outside immediately afterwards and jot down your notes.

There's no such thing as a free lunch. You must make some donation to help cover your meal. There are two ways to do this. You can:

1. volunteer your time to help out—see list of activities in the brochure. If you choose to volunteer, do so *after* you have had your free lunch (i.e., later that day or on a subsequent day).
2. donate food or other items—see brochure
3. donate money – use form in brochure and mail to them.

For more information or to make arrangements to volunteer or donate, contact Mary Palmberg at 337-7917 or email her at [frelunch@avalon.net](mailto:frelunch@avalon.net).

Write a 2-3-page paper to demonstrate what you learned from this experience. It will be graded pass/fail. Include all of the following points.

1. Description – Describe the kinds of people eating at Free Lunch, their age, gender, ethnic/racial identities, dress, appearance, mannerisms, speech patterns, etc. Were they who you expected?
2. Interactions – Describe your interactions with people, what you did, what they said to you, what you learned about them from talking to them.
3. Policies –
  - a. Do you agree or disagree with the Free Lunch eligibility policy of serving everyone who comes, no questions asked? There are no eligibility guidelines, no forms to fill out, and no means test. Say why you agree or disagree with this policy.
  - b. Do you think they should charge a set fee for the lunches? Why or why not?
  - c. Do you think that the government should be providing this service instead of voluntary organizations and churches? Why or why not?

**Due date:** Your paper is due in class the session following the week during which you ate at the Free Lunch Program.

## **Elder Care Policy Paper**

Due in class on November 21, 200-

This paper provides you an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the basic health care and cash benefits available to most people over the age of 65 in the United States and to consider the adequacy of these benefits for a person central to your life.

1. Select an older person whom you may have some responsibility to care for in his or her old age. This person may be one (or both) of your parents, a spouse, partner, sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparent. You will have to make a number of assumptions about this person's health and financial situation to complete this assignment.
2. Calculate the person's expected monthly Social Security benefits after retirement. If you have the person's Social Security statement, which is sent out each year, use that. Otherwise, use the Quick Calculator found at the Social Security website:

<http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/calculators.htm>

To use the Quick Calculator, you will need to estimate the person's current earnings if you don't know what they are. The benefits the person receives will also depend on the age at which he or she begins to draw benefits (e.g., 62, 65, 70, etc.), so make an educated guess as to when this will be.

3. Select a Medicare Plan and assess the cost of monthly Medicare premiums.

<http://www.medicare.gov/Choices/Overview.asp>

4. Estimate the monthly cost of housing, food, clothing, prescription drugs, and additional expenses.

In 2-3 double-spaced pages, describe the financial situation this elderly person will face during his or her retirement years. How much money the person will need from sources other than Social Security to live comfortably? Discuss how the person's care needs will affect your life if you become primarily responsible for this person.

Attach your calculation of expenses and income.