

**University at Buffalo**  
School of Social Work

**Social Welfare History and Policy**  
SW 500D • Fall 2009

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides students with a comprehensive view of the American welfare state with special emphasis on policies and programs directly affecting vulnerable populations. Students will be introduced to the historical and philosophical bases of American social welfare programs and the profession of social work. Specifically, the course will help students (1) understand the precedents of the contemporary welfare state in terms of their underlying motivations - political, ideological, economic, religious, and social, and the extent of their impact on the subsequent social welfare institutions and social work; (2) become familiar with many of the basic social welfare programs; and (3) develop policy and program analysis skills to measure the effectiveness of these programs in upholding human rights, redressing poverty and trauma, and achieving other specified social goals. Students will be introduced to content on the impact of globalization on the American social welfare system and how the U.S. social welfare system compares with the systems in other countries.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

*After completing this course students will be able to:*

1. Define the purpose of social welfare policy, comprehend the process of social policy development and implementation, and identify basic social welfare programs;
2. Articulate how variations in political and social conditions, values, and support for human rights influence the definition of social problems and advocacy for social justice;
3. Discuss the evolution of the American social welfare system and historical trends in social welfare expenditures and programs in the United States, including the Elizabethan Poor Laws, the role of private philanthropy, the growth of the public sector, and the roles of the private-for-profit and not-for-profit sectors;

4. Analyze the impact of social attitudes, biases, and historical events (e.g., the Great Depression, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights and other human rights movements) on the development and implementation of, and societal response to, social welfare policy;
5. Apply social, political and economic policy analysis skills to a variety of social policies and programs;
6. Analyze the differential impact of social welfare programs on people at various social locations (e.g., race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental abilities, age, national origin, and immigration status), including the potential of policy to prevent and ameliorate the diverse forms of trauma as well as to increase and exacerbate the vulnerability of some individuals and communities;
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the barriers to achieving adequacy and inclusion in service delivery systems, such as lack of coverage, unequal access, and cost containment, and the differential impact of these barriers on people at various social locations;
8. Identify and discuss the personal, professional, and cultural ideologies that underlie social welfare policies and programs (e.g., human rights, social work values, and the concepts of adequacy, efficiency, equality, equity, and social justice);
9. Articulate the evolution of the social work profession, its influence on the evolution of social welfare policy, and the different perspectives on the role of social work in addressing social problems (e.g., as an instrument of social control, as an instrument to alleviate suffering);
10. Articulate the role of social workers as policy innovators and social justice advocates, and the strategies used by grassroots organizations and activists to challenge those social welfare policies that fail to protect human rights, redress trauma, or eradicate social injustice; and
11. Understand how American social welfare policies compare to the social welfare policies of other industrialized countries, and the impact of globalization on the American welfare state.

#### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

- **DiNitto, D.** (2007). *Social Welfare: Politics and Public Policy* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- **Trattner, W. I.** (1999). *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Additional Readings are available on the *UBLearns* Blackboard class website.  
NASW Code of Ethics @ <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>.

#### **RECOMMENDED TEXT:**

- **American Psychological Association.** (2010) Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

## **COURSE FORMAT:**

This course meets weekly for 2 hours and 50 minutes. Course content will be presented via a variety of methods: lecture and discussion, work in small groups, analysis of case examples, class exercises, videos, and student presentations. One important source of learning in this class will be the class itself. Your personal and professional experiences will be important sources of class discussions. In order to be a valuable contributor as well as a thoughtful learner, it is critical that you attend class both physically and intellectually. This includes coming to class prepared to discuss the week's readings and relevant current events.

## **ROLE OF FACULTY AND STUDENTS**

I will lecture, facilitate class discussions, model and encourage open discussion, and foster an environment in which students' values, knowledge and experiences can be explored and their diverse perspectives can be understood, respected and critically examined. I will also provide readings, assignment information, and be available for consultation and feedback. Assignments will be returned in a timely manner.

You are expected to read the assigned readings prior to class sessions and come prepared to discuss these readings in class. You are expected to share your knowledge, experience, comments, critiques, feedback, and alternative opinions. Please be sure to **turn off** cell phones and pagers upon arriving in the classroom.

**Class Attendance and Participation:** The classroom environment is the mutual responsibility of the instructor and the students. Both class attendance and participation are expected. You are expected to arrive to class **on time** and participate fully in class discussion.

**Students should be mindful that this is a required course and you need at least a B- in this class to pass.** Students may be justifiably absent from classes due to religious observances, illness documented by a physician or other appropriate health care professional, conflicts with University sanctioned activities, public emergencies, and documented personal or family emergencies. An obligation with your field placement is **not** an acceptable reason for missing class. Students should call or email me as soon as possible to inform me of any unanticipated absence. If you are absent, it is **your responsibility** to get the notes and/or assignments that you miss from either myself or your fellow students.

**Missed Classes and Lateness Penalties:** Students with more than one unexcused absence will have their final course grade lowered by 1/3 a letter grade for each absence. For instance, a student whose points across all assignments add up to 88 (i.e., a B+) but has missed two classes will receive a B as a final course grade. Repeated tardiness (i.e., more than two late arrivals) or premature departure will similarly affect a student's final grade.

**Special Needs:** If you have a learning disability, sensory, or physical disability or impairment, or if English is your second language and you need special assistance in lecture, reading assignments, and/or testing, please let me know. Students with disabilities should also contact the Office of Disabilities Services, 645-3116, 25 Capen, North Campus.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty during testing periods and in the composition of assigned papers is expected. If any problems arise for you regarding any aspect of the course, please come and talk to me so that the problem(s) may be remedied. Violations of academic honesty in the preparation of papers (e.g., plagiarism) or cheating during an exam will result in a zero for the assignment/exam. Please review *Graduate School Policies and Procedures: A Manual for Graduate Students and Advisors*, available at:

<http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/index.php>

## GRADING CRITERIA

**Expectations Regarding Written Work:** Students are expected to write papers that conform to guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)* which is on the reference shelf of the library. Students must become familiar with the APA guidelines. Appropriate citations are required for all your formal assignments. Make sure to reference any work that you use. Papers must also be double-spaced, include page numbers, headings and subheadings, and have 1" margins on all sides. **All papers should be one-sided.** You must also have a title page for all formal papers.

Students are expected to hand in papers free of typographical errors with correct grammar and spelling, and proper references. Students are also encouraged to use the School's two writing tutors, Tamara Rabe and Lizzie Finnegan, for help with papers. Contact Tamara and Lizzie to set up appointments and for feedback about your papers. Tamara's email address is: [rabe@buffalo.edu](mailto:rabe@buffalo.edu). Lizzie's email address is: [ehfinnegan@gmail.com](mailto:ehfinnegan@gmail.com). Students are also encouraged to email or come to me with any questions or concerns about written assignments.

**POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Late assignments will be penalized half a letter grade **per day** (for example, from an A to an A-) unless permission is received from the instructor **in advance of the due date**, and only for extenuating circumstances (e.g., injury, illness). The instructor will **not** accept late assignments handed in later than one-week past the due date.

### *A Word about the Internet*

There is a wealth of information on the Internet about social welfare policies, the federal budget, the economy, tax policy, poverty, housing, health, and other social policy issues. Students are encouraged to seek out this information, but to **be selective** in what to use. For assigned papers, use **peer-reviewed journal articles** and **chapters from scholarly books**.

**Limit Internet resources** to government documents, materials from governmental departments (e.g., U.S. Department of Labor, the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Census Bureau); organizations such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the Children's Defense Fund; policy institutes such as the Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Urban Institute; and professional associations such as NASW and CSWE. You are **NOT** to use Wikipedia, Encarta, or other online encyclopedias. If you have any questions on what is appropriate to use, ask me. **There will be a grading penalty for papers using non-scholarly resources. Make sure that you cite internet sources appropriately using APA guidelines.** (On Blackboard, there is a list of internet sites that I encourage you to explore).

## **Course Grading Scale:**

All requirements are scored on a 100 point scale and then averaged (based on % weight) for your final grade. Final letter grades assigned in the course correspond to the following cumulative point totals:

A	95-100 points	B	83-86 points	C	73-76 points
A-	90-94 points	B-	80-82 points	C-	70-72 points
B+	87-89 points	C+	77-79 points	F	<70 points

HIPAA ALERT: In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your own work will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow someone to know the identity of the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if you are confident it will not allow for identification.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Class Discussion Facilitation**

During the semester student groups will introduce and facilitate a discussion of the week's topic based on a specific assigned reading. You will work in groups of two or three to generate a set of questions and an activity designed to stimulate discussion regarding the week's topic and your chosen reading. Further details and a schedule of presentations will be discussed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> class. **(15%)**

### **Mini-Paper Assignment**

The Mini-Papers are intended for you to develop an understanding of the basic concepts, principles, and themes of social welfare policy and services & to develop skills in identifying and distilling key ideas, and expressing them concisely. **(20%)**

### **Mid-Term Exam (25%)**

### **Individual Policy Analysis Paper**

Each individual student will conduct a problem and policy analysis on a particular legislative policy of his/her choice. **(40%)**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**August 31.....Student and Faculty Introductions, Course Overview: Expectations, Grading & Assignments**

- **Introduction to the Concepts:** Social Work, Social Justice, Social Welfare, & Social Welfare Policy

**September 7.....No Class, Labor Day**

**September 14..... Defining Social Justice in an Unjust World & Social Work's 100 Year Debate**

- **DiNitto**, Chapter 1
- **Reisch, M.** (2002). Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World. *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 83 (4) 343-354.
- **Sowers, K. and Rowe, W.** (2007). "The Evolution of Social Work around the World," in *Social Work Practice & Social Justice: From Local to Global Perspectives* (pp. 2-9) Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

### ***Discussion groups formed and readings chosen***

**September 21..... Social Workers as Practitioners and Advocates & All Social Work is Political**

- **DiNitto**, Chapter 11
- **Haynes, K. and Mickelson, J.** (2006). "The Practitioner's Influence on Policy," in *Affecting Change: Social Workers in the Political Arena* (pp. 82-94) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- **\*Gibelman, M.** (1999). The Search for Identity: Defining Social Work-Past, Present and Future. *Social Work*, 44(4) 298-310.
- **\*Haynes, K.** (1998). The One Hundred-Year Debate: Social Reform versus Individual Treatment. *Social Work*, 43 (6) 501-509.

### ***Handout Mini Paper Assignment***

**September 28.....No Class-Yom Kippur**

**October 5....Historical Responses to Social Welfare: Precursors to American Welfare State**

- **DiNitto**, Chapter 2
- **Trattner**, Chapters 1-5
- **\*Abramovitz, M.** (1996). "Women and the Poor Laws in Colonial America," in *Regulating the Lives of Women*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Boston: South End Press, pp. 75-105.

## October 12.....The Progressive Era and the Roots of the Profession

- **Trattner**, Chapters 6, 8, 11, & 12
- **Rabinowitz, H.** (1974). "From Exclusion to Segregation: Health and Welfare Services for Southern Blacks, 1865-1890," *Social Service Review* 84(3): 327-354.

**Video:** *Orphan Trains*

### **Mini Papers Due**

## October 19..... The New Deal and the Establishment of the Welfare State

- **DiNitto**, Chapter 3
- **Trattner**, Chapter 13
- **\*Cooper Hamilton, D. & Charles V. Hamilton** (1997). "Coping with the New Deal," in *The Dual Agenda: The African American Struggle for Civil and Economic Equality*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 8-42.
- **\*Rose, N.** (1990). Discrimination against Women in New Deal Work Programs. *Affilia*, 5(2) 25-45.

**Video:** *The Women of Hull House*

### **Handout Mid-Term Exam**

## October 26..... The Great Society and the War on Poverty

- **DiNitto**, Chapters 4 & 9
- **Trattner**, Chapter 14
- **\*Hill, M.S.** (1985). The Changing Nature of Poverty. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 479, 31-47.
- **Zimbalist, S.E.** (1988) Winning the War on Poverty: the Swedish Strategy. *Social Work*, 33 (1) 46-49.

**Video:** *Eyes on the Prize*

## November 2..... Social Problem Analysis: The 1<sup>st</sup> Step in Policy Analysis

- **\*Sarnoff, S.** (2003). Central Appalachia—Still the *Other* America. *Journal of Poverty*, 7, (1/2) 123-139.
- **\*Ozawa, M.N.** (2004). Social Welfare Spending on Family Benefits in the United States and Sweden: A Comparative Study. *Family Relations*, 53, 301-309.

### **Hand out Individual Policy Paper Assignment**

## November 9.....CSWE/APHA Conferences

- **Meet in 109 Lockwood Library** for Lecture by Government Docs. Librarian Ed Herman

**Mid-Term Exam Due---Hand in to Ed Herman**

## November 16..... Social Policy Analysis Part 1: Allocations and Benefits, Who Gets What and What do They Get?

- **Popple & Leighninger**, Chapter 3, Social Welfare Policy Analysis: Basic Concepts
- **Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P.**, Chapter 4
- **\*Abramovitz, M.** (2001). Everyone is Still on Welfare: The Role of Redistribution in Social Policy. *Social Work*, 46, 297-308.

## November 23..... Social Policy Analysis Part 2: How Services are Delivered and How Benefits are Financed

- **DiNitto**, Chapter 12
- **Gilbert, N. & Terrell, P.**, Chapter 5
- **Hudson, K. & Coukos, A.** (2005). The Dark Side of the Protestant Work Ethic: A Comparative Analysis of Welfare Reform. *Sociological Theory*, 23, 1-24.

**Video:** *Ending Welfare as We Know it*

## November 30.....From Reagan's Retrenchment to the Modern Welfare State

- DiNitto, Chapters 6 & 7
- **Trattner**, Chapters 15 & 16
- **\*Abramovitz, M.** (1992). The Reagan Legacy: Undoing Class, Race, and Gender Accords. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 19, 91-110.
- **\*Kaushal, N. et al** (2007). Welfare Reform and Family Expenditures: How Are Single Mothers Adapting to the New Welfare and Work Regime?" *Social Service Review*, 81 (3) 369-396.

## December 7..... Final Discussion Facilitation (if needed) & Course Wrap-up

**\*Altman, J.C. & Goldberg, G.** (2008). Rethinking Social Work's Role in Public Assistance. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 35, 71-94.

**Video:** *Waging a Living*

**Individual Policy Analysis Papers Due**

Have a Wonderful Holiday Break ☺

**\*\*\*This syllabus may be subject to modifications**