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SW 310.01: Social Welfare Policies and Services

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Social Work 310
Social Welfare Policies & Services
Kghenie@selway.umt.edu
Office hours M, W (10:30 – 1:00)

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Social work is a profession that requires an understanding of how public policies are made and the ability to influence the political decision-making process. The field has a responsibility to promote social justice and shape public policy by being politically active and by mobilizing disenfranchised populations to influence decisions that impact their lives. This is a challenging prospect given our limited political clout and the power of special interest groups.

In this course we will examine the process by which public policies are formulated and their resulting impact on various segments of American society. We will explore the role of non-governmental agencies, interest and advocacy groups and governmental agencies in resolving social problems. We also will see how different groups and individuals influence the policy-making process, both in terms of the issues that are addressed and the parameters established to deal with such issues. As we shall see, no political process is neutral in its impacts; some groups tend to benefit far more than others regarding how policies are developed and how they are implemented.

To facilitate an understanding of the political process we will review and critically analyze major social policies that impact citizens. Specific domestic policy areas will include welfare reform, child welfare, chemical dependency, and mental health/health care. We will also focus our inquiry on policies crafted to address the needs of such marginalized groups as women and children, Native people, elderly, and mentally ill.

Because a democracy is not a spectator sport and engaged citizens are active participants in their communities, you are expected to actively contribute to building knowledge in this course. While I will share with you my perspectives, knowledge, and experiences in policy-related areas, I expect you to offer your observations and knowledge to the class. Although the classroom will be highly interactive and somewhat “laid back,” it will be academically challenging.

Social Work 310 is the department's *designated writing course* and you will be expected to **present clear, concise, and well-organized written documents that adhere to APA guidelines**. You will also be required to critique current programs as they address the needs of marginalized and traditionally oppressed populations while examining strategies to provide effective, culturally sensitive programs. Similarly, you will need to demonstrate an understanding of the values that shape policy and critically analyze how the policies affect citizens marginalized from the political decision-making process.

The class will be conducted as a seminar. Therefore, it is imperative that students come to class prepared to discuss reading assignments. I will provide material as needed, but for the most part the class will be an opportunity for us to reflect upon and analyze questions about social problems and community change through civic participation and policy development. Students will be encouraged to bring their experiences as they relate to topic themes.

ASSIGNED READINGS & BOOKS

Kessler, D. (2001). *A Question of Intent: A Great American Battle with a Deadly Industry*. New York: Public Affairs.

Schlosser, E. (2001). *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Readings – Mansfield library’s E-res. System: E-res password is SW310

The Newspaper (could include the Missoulian, Great Falls Tribune, or Billings Gazette; along with such secondary sources as The New York Times or Washington Post)

ASSIGNMENTS

A. Quizzes --There will be a quiz every other Friday beginning September 13. Each quiz will cover designated chapters in the assigned books, library readings, and discussions about APA guidelines. A breakdown of the chapters and quiz dates are outlined below. Make-up quizzes are only allowed if your absence is excused **before** the date and time of the quiz.

Fast Food Nation **September 13** – Introduction, Chs 1,2, 3 & 4; E-res readings 1&2;
September 27 – Chs 5, 6, 7, & 8; E-res readings 3; **October 11** - Chs 9, 10, & epilogue;

Question of Intent **October 25** – Veritas, Part I; E-res reading 4; **November 8** – Part II;
November 22 – Part III; **December 6** – Part IV;

B. Papers -- You are required to complete *three* short papers. The papers should not exceed five pages and must contain a minimum of three sources. Although we will discuss the papers in class, each must include: 1) an overview of a current or proposed social policy (e.g., Gun Control, North American Free Trade Agreement, Welfare Reform, Health Care, etc) in place at the federal, state or local level; 2) the predominant value systems and major factors (i.e., social economic, political) that precipitated its development; 3) the potential impact of the policy on other social policies, social problems, and the public; and 4) proposed or alternative policy options that might combat the problem more effectively.

You must correctly cite your sources (e.g., journal & newspaper readings, Web sites) giving credit to the authors whose work you refer to. Use the APA publication manual on reserve at the library. **Due Dates – October 4, October 25, November 15**

C. Proposal -- Prepare a program proposal that advances a solution to one of the social problems you wrote about in your short papers. Your paper will include: 1) an introduction to the problem; 2) a description of the methods to alleviate the current situation; 3) a set of clearly stated objectives; 4) a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the program; 5) a plan for future spending; and 6) a budget. Paper Length: 7-8 Pages. **Due Date -- December 13**

<u>POINTS</u>		
	Attendance	15
	Quizzes	35
	Short papers	150
	<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>100</u>
	TOTAL	300

<u>GRADING</u>		
	A	300-270
	B	269-240
	C	239-210
	D	209-180
	F	179 and below

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Sept. 4	Social Policy and its importance to Social Work
Week 2 Sept. 9	History; Frameworks for Policy Analysis; Research Resources September 13: Quiz One
Week 3 Sept 16	How Policy is Made; Speaker - Mike Halligan, Montana Senator and Attorney for the Department of Justice; APA and Writing
Week 4 Sept. 23	Discrimination; Racism; Poverty; and Diversity in America September 27: Quiz Two
Week 5 Sept. 30	Policy as Intervention; APA and Writing; Discussion of Papers October 4: Paper One Due
Week 6 Oct 7	Policy Practice on Varying Levels; Speaker October 11: Quiz Three
Week 7 Oct. 14	Tribal Policy Development; ICWA; APA and Writing
Week 8 Oct. 21	Service Delivery Systems/Choices: The Voluntary Sector and Privatization October 24: Quiz Four; Paper Two Due
Week 9 Oct. 28	Child Welfare and Public Assistance Policy
Week 10 Nov. 4	NAFTA and Labor Policy November 8: Quiz Five
Week 11 Nov. 11	Substance Abuse; A.P.A and Writing; Discussion of Papers November 11: Veterans Day Holiday – No Class November 15: Paper Three Due
Week 12 Nov. 18	Grant Writing; Policy Proposals November 22: Quiz Six
Week 13 Nov. 25	Housing and Food Policy November 27 & 29: Thanksgiving Break – No Class
Week 14 Dec. 2	Social Security, Health Care and Mental Health Policy December 6: Quiz 7
Week 15 Dec. 9	American Criminal Justice Policy; Discussion of Papers December 13: Paper Four Due