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SW 310.01: Social Welfare Policies and Services

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Social Work 310 Social Welfare Policies & Services

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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 - to include one "local" paper (Missoulian, Great Falls Tribune, Billings Gazette, etc) and one secondary source (New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, L.A. Times, etc)

RECOMMENDED BOOK

Publication manual of the american psychological association (2001). Washington: American psychological Association.

ASSIGNMENTS

A. Quizzes --There will be a quiz every other Friday beginning February 7. Each quiz will cover designated chapters in the assigned books, library readings, and discussions about APA guidelines. Each quiz will consist of five short-answer essay questions. 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.

February 7 - Fast Food Nation introduction & chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4; E-res readings 1&2;

February 21 - Fast Food Nation chapters 5, 6, 7, & 8;

March 7 – Fast Food Nation Chapters 9, 10, & epilogue; E-res readings 3;

March 21 – A Question of Intent - Veritas and Part I; E-res reading 4;

April 4 – A Question of Intent - Part II;

April 18 – A Question of Intent - Part III;

April 2- A Question of Intent - Part IV

B. Papers -- You are required to complete two (2) 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 social problem/issue and 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: February 28 and March 14**

C. Group Research Paper & Presentation – Students will work in groups of three to complete this two-part project. **Please note, the following web site will be an invaluable resource for this project: www.leg.state.mt.us**

Part one: Proposed Legislation Research Paper. Students will research one (1) proposed bill at the **Montana State level**. Your project paper will include: 1) Identification of proposed legislation at the Montana State level; 2) An outline/history of the bill actions to include committee history and voting outcomes; 3) Identification of the bill sponsor(s) and drafter; 4) a description of the bill text; 5) A description of the social problem/issue the proposed bill would address, change, amend, etc. 6) The predominant values systems and major factors (social, political, economic) that precipitated the development of the bill; 7) The financial implications if the bill is enacted; 8) Interview a local service provider, service consumer or activist to determine the impact this bill would have on individuals, groups, populations and/or services providers in the Missoula community and the State of Montana; 9) Alternative options that may address the identified social problem/issue more effectively.

A minimum of three references is required. You must correctly cite your sources (e.g., interview, newspaper readings, web sites) giving credit to the authors whose work you refer to. Use the APA publication manual on reserve at the library. Paper Length: 6-7 pages.
Due Date: April 11

Part two: A letter to the student's Congressional Representative or Senator. Members of the triad will identify their Montana Congressional Representative and Senator. Each Student will compose a letter asking that his or her legislator either support or oppose the passage of the bill the student researched. Letters shall include the following: 1) Identify the bill by Number and Title; 2) Give the sponsor's name and a brief summary of the bill; 3) Explanation of the student's position on the bill and reasons why the legislator should support or oppose its passage into law; 4) Give the sources of the information used; 5) Ask the legislator's consideration of the student's views; 6) Include student's identifying information: name, title, and return address. Letter Length: 1-2 pages. **Due Date: April 11.**

Part three: A 15-minute group presentation of your research findings. Each group will present the findings of their proposed legislation research to the class on an assigned day. **Due Date: To be arranged in class.**

D. 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 set of clearly stated goals and objectives; 3) a description of methods to alleviate the current situation; 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 –May 7.**

POLICY FOR LATE PAPERS

All papers are to be turned in during class on the assigned day. Each day a paper is late; one (1) point will be deducted from the final grade for that paper.

POINTS

Attendance	25
Quizzes	35
Short papers	100
Group Project	90
Final Paper	100
TOTAL	350

GRADING

A	350-315
B	314-288
C	287-260
D	259-234
F	233 and below

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Jan. 27	Social Policy and its importance to Social Work
Week 2 Feb. 3	Framework for Policy Analysis; Research Resources February 5: Class will meet at 11:10 in the Mansfield Library Lobby February 7: Quiz One
Week 3 Feb. 10	How Policy is Made; The Political Process and Lobbying February 11: Guest Speakers Constantino Rueben Moreno Mendez & Tom Hansen – International Human Rights Activists
Week 4 Feb. 17	February 17: President's Day Holiday – No Class February 19: NASW Student Lobby Day - Helena February 21: Quiz Two
Week 5 Feb. 24	Policy Practice on Varying Levels; APA and Writing; Discussion of Papers February 28: Paper One Due
Week 6 Mar. 3	Modern Welfare State; Basis of Social Allocations March 7: Quiz Three
Week 7 Mar. 10	Service Delivery Systems/Choices: The Voluntary Sector and Privatization March 14: Paper Two Due
Week 8 Mar. 17	Tribal Policies and ICWA; APA and Writing March 10 & 12 Guest Speaker Deborah Rattler March 21: Quiz Four
Week 9	Spring Break

Mar. 24

Week 10

Mar. 31

Public Assistance Programs: Poverty & Welfare Reform

April 4: Quiz Five

Week 11

Apr. 7

Social Insurance Programs: Social Security; Unemployment
Workers Compensation

April 11: Group Projects Due

Week 12

Apr. 14

Grant Writing; Policy Proposals

April 18: Quiz Six

Week 13

Apr. 21

Group Project Presentations; Child Welfare

Week 14

Apr. 28

American Health Care System: Medicare; Medicaid; S-Chip

May 2: Quiz 7

Week 15

May 5

American Criminal Justice Policy; Discussion of Papers

May 7: Paper Four Due