SSS 831
Advanced Social Policy Analysis
(3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Moore Oliphant

©This course outline is the property of NCSSS and the Instructor and may be distributed only with written permission.

I. COURSE PURPOSE

SSS 831 is offered to advanced curriculum students and builds on knowledge and skills gained in the foundation year in the following areas: the values and roots of the social work profession; the history of social welfare; contemporary social welfare policy; policy analysis; and policy advocacy. In addition, it is intended to complement course work in community development, social planning, research, ethics, evaluation, and nonprofit management. Building on this background knowledge, the course is designed to enable students to identify, apply, and critique the political, moral, and economic philosophies underlying social welfare policies. The role of the social worker as policy analyst and advocate is placed in the perspective of the emerging field of policy analysis wherein practitioners from a variety of disciplines compete for the attention of policy makers in order to influence decision outcomes. Emphasis is placed on student understanding of the salient situational factors (including employment in public, private/corporate, and non-profit settings), professional identity, value commitments, etc. that influence how a policy analysis is conceived and executed.

The course addresses the competing political and moral philosophical arguments underlying social policy decision-making, the cultural settings that influence policy analysis, American democracy and the fragmentation of consensus, and the on-going devolution of public policy decision-making to the state and local government levels. The course also gives particular attention to developing social work understanding of economic concepts, particularly the role of the ‘market’ in helping to understand social policy decision-making. Within a social, political and economic context, students will better understand the structure and functions of policy argumentation to deepen their analytic and advocacy capacity.
II. COMPETENCIES AND PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Practice behaviors that are covered this class are indicated by **bold**. Practice behaviors that are not covered in this class are indicated by grey.

1. Professional Identity:
*Identify as a professional social worker & conduct oneself accordingly.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Social workers demonstrate professional use of self across all practice settings.</td>
<td>1.1 Social workers demonstrate professional use of self across all practice settings.</td>
<td>1.1 Social workers demonstrate professional use of self across all practice settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.</td>
<td>1.2 Develop, manage, and maintain therapeutic and professional relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.</td>
<td>1.2 Develop, manage, and maintain professional relationships with clients within the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Ethical Practice
*Apply social work ethical principles to guide advanced practice.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings.</td>
<td>2.1 Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings.</td>
<td>2.1 Social workers recognize and manage personal biases in practice settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Social workers recognize and negotiate the complexities that can arise when organizational policies/procedures interact with competing professional standards for ethical social</td>
<td>2.2 Social workers recognize and negotiate the complexities that can arise when organizational policies/procedures interact with competing professional standards for ethical social</td>
<td>2.2 Social workers recognize and negotiate the complexities that can arise when organizational policies/procedures interact with competing professional standards for ethical social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
standards for ethical social work practice.

2.3 Social workers apply ethical principles through the use of an ethical decision making model that helps in the resolution of an ethical dilemma.

3. Critical Thinking

*Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Social workers engage in reflective practice.</td>
<td>3.1 Social workers engage in reflective practice.</td>
<td>3.1 Social workers engage in reflective practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.</td>
<td>3.2 Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.</td>
<td>3.2 Social workers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and differentially apply them to client situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Diversity in Practice

*Engage diversity and demonstrate awareness of the complexities regarding identity differences and how they impact practice.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
<td>4.1 Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
<td>4.1 Social workers use their self-awareness to understand the influence of their personal biases and values in working with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Social workers practice within the context of difference in shaping the life experiences of clients, themselves, and the working alliance.

5. Human Rights & Justice

*Advance human rights through understanding how social and economic justice factors impact practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Change</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 Social workers practice with the understanding that societal structures and values may oppress, marginalize, and alienate, or create, enhance, and privilege different cultural groups within a society.

5.2 Social workers advocate at multiple levels for the human rights of marginalized populations.

6. Research Based Practice

*Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Change</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1 Social workers critically evaluate and utilize theoretical models and empirical research methods for the purpose of informing and evaluating social work practice and programs.
### 7. Human Behavior

*Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Social workers differentially apply theories of human behavior that address the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of clients and the social environment to guide social work practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Policy Practice

*Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Advocate with and inform administrators and legislators to influence policies that affect clients and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9. Practice Contexts

*Respond to contexts that shape advanced social work practice.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Social workers assess the current political, economic, social, and cultural climate as it affects the most vulnerable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate

Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Social Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.1.1 Use empathy, active listening, and other clinical skills to establish rapport in order to set treatment goals with clients.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.1.2 Develop culturally responsive therapeutic relationships.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.1.3 Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the therapeutic alliance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.1.4 Effectively use interpersonal skills to establish collaboration between multiple stakeholders involved in enhancing organizational, community, and social well-being.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessment:

**Social workers:**

- **10.2.1** Use multi-dimensional assessment tools that include bio-psycho-social-spiritual data to assess client’s strengths, capacities, and readiness for change.

- **10.2.2** Use differential diagnostic processes.

- **10.2.3** Assess organizations, communities, and policy environments using relevant theories and models.

### Intervention:

**Social workers:**

- **10.3.1** Develop, with clients, an intervention plan that incorporates client strengths, capacities, and protective factors.

- **10.3.2** Use culturally appropriate clinical techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment.

- **10.3.3** Adapt appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment.

- **10.3.4** Use appropriate and collaborative interventions to affect organizational, community, and societal change.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social well-being.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.2.1 Use multi-dimensional assessment tools that include bio-psycho-social-spiritual data to assess client’s strengths, capacities, and readiness for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.2.2 Use differential diagnostic processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.2.3 Assess organizations, communities, and policy environments using relevant theories and models.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.3.1 Develop, with clients, an intervention plan that incorporates client strengths, capacities, and protective factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.3.2 Use culturally appropriate clinical techniques for a range of presenting concerns identified in the assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.3.3 Adapt appropriate intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10.3.4 Use appropriate and collaborative interventions to affect organizational, community, and societal change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
collaborative interventions to affect organizational, community, and societal change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers:</td>
<td>Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.4.1 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions and program implementation and outcomes.</td>
<td>• 10.4.1 Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions and program implementation and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.4.2 Revise intervention and program implementation plans based on ongoing process and outcome evaluation.</td>
<td>• 10.4.2 Revise intervention and program implementation plans based on ongoing process and outcome evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. FURTHER EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the role and function of policy analysis in the policy-making process and its impact on social welfare programs in which social workers are most actively involved.

2. Understand the class economic and philosophical perspectives which inform the policy analysis process, the policy variables, and the ultimate policy choices that are encompassed by these theories and approaches.

3. Understand the determinants of the public social policy process, including agenda-setting and policy subsystem engagement.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts and Readings:


B. Recommended Readings:


C. Other Recommended Resources and Media:


Recommended Websites:

The rise of global information technology has revolutionized the research process and has changed the nature of social policy analysis and policy practice. The World Wide Web allows organizations to gather policy information quickly and disseminate information to a wide audience. Thus, the task of policy research becomes far easier than was previously possible and students can consult an impressive range of internet resources when exploring policy issues. Government organizations, such as the Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)), the General Accounting Office ([www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)), the U.S. Senate ([www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)), the U.S. House of Representatives ([www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)), the Department of Health and Human Services ([www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov)) and the Administration for Children and Families ([www.acf.dhhs.gov](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov)) provide information and statistics. Policy organizations, such as the Brookings Institute ([www.brook.edu](http://www.brook.edu)), the Rand Corporation ([www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)), and the Urban Institute ([www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)) provide substantial amounts of data and analysis on-line. There are also large sites that combine materials from many organizations such as the Electronic Policy Network ([www.epn.org](http://www.epn.org)) and Handsnet ([www.handsnet.org](http://www.handsnet.org)), and Citizens for Tax Justice ([www.ctj.org](http://www.ctj.org)). The Library of Congress houses the Thomas site ([http://thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov)) that provides on-line copies of all proposed legislation. Religious groups such as the World Council of Churches ([www.worldcouncilofchurches.org](http://www.worldcouncilofchurches.org)) and the United States Catholic Bishops ([www.uscatholicbishops.org](http://www.uscatholicbishops.org)) are active in the policy advocacy community and make their positions available through their websites. Other websites that may be useful for this course include: The Economist ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)); Government Performance Project ([www.gpponline.org](http://www.gpponline.org)); National Conference of State Legislatures ([www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)); the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities ([www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)); and the American Enterprise Institute ([www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org)). Students are expected to consult the above sources regularly on topics of relevance to the course and to their particular policy interests.
D. **Course Assignments:**

Students will complete six formal assignments as part of the course. Three 4-5 page papers on ONE social policy will be due as noted below. The three papers will aid the student in fully developing and analyzing a social policy of interest to them. The final paper (16-20 pages in length) will reflect feedback and corrections/edits from the first three papers, plus a section on advocating and implementing a change in the policy and/or its implementation, according to analytical findings. Additional guidelines will be provided in class.

Students will attend a legislative hearing and write a 5 page paper critiquing the hearing based on the guidelines the students will learn in class.

Students are expected to prepare one type-written question on a weekly basis from the assigned readings or a professional media source for discussion in class. This exercise is most beneficial if students relate the readings to current social policy happenings (news sources), social work field practice, or social work history. This activity is included as part of the attendance and participation grade.

E. **Grading Policy:** The university grading system will be utilized (see policy in bulletin). The grade will be based upon the extent to which the student meets the course objectives as demonstrated by class participation and the two NCSSS required papers.

F. **Attendance and Participation**

1. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to arrive at classes on time, and to conduct themselves in an ethical and scholarly fashion. In the event that it is necessary for a participant to miss a class session or come late, s/he is expected to notify the instructor in advance. Students are responsible for obtaining any class notes or other materials distributed when they are absent. Unexcused or multiple absences may result in a reduction of the final grade.

2. The use of laptops or other devices should be used in such a manner that they do not disturb or distract other students. Recording devices should only be used with the permission of the instructor and should be turned off at the request of the instructor or class participants when requested in the event that personal or confidential information is being discussed.

3. Students are expected to read all required readings for each class session and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions and exercises.

4. The course combines the formats of didactic lectures and participatory seminars. Students and the instructor will endeavor to draw on their own experience including professional practice experience, relevant literature and analytic thinking about the course content. Each student is expected to participate actively in class discussions and to come prepared to share current knowledge, ideas, and relevant experiences as appropriate. Students and the instructor will view each other as resource persons.
G. **Course and Instructor Evaluation:**

NCSSS requires electronic evaluation of this course and the instructor. At the end of the semester, the evaluation form may be accessed at [http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations](http://evaluations.cua.edu/evaluations) using your CUA username and password. Additional informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to special requests. These evaluations will serve as a basis for ongoing course revisions.

V. **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

**Scholastic Expectations:**

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should demonstrate communication ability consistent with graduate level performance, reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

**Academic Honesty:**

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and Appropriate Program Handbooks.

**Accommodations:**

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other challenges wishing to request accommodations must identify themselves with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. Once you have documented a disability, DSS will establish whether any accommodations or academic adjustments are required. If so, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1
Introduction and Overview of the Course
Policy Models and The Policy Universe: Actors, Institutions, and the Policy Agenda-Setting Process: This first session will give students an overview of the course and reintroduce students to the values in social work policy analysis. The nature of social policy, its role as a philosophical concept, process, product, and framework for action will be discussed. Students will also review the stages of the policy cycle and the role of actors and institutions in the policy subsystem. Greater attention to the role of the Policy Universe in the agenda-setting process will be the springboard for understanding its role in other stages of the policy cycle.

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 2

Gil’s Conceptual Model of Social Policies: Students will discuss Gil’s conceptual model of social policies as a framework for understanding the underlying motivations for social policy choices, the five core institutional systems or processes used to carry out social policy functions and evaluative criteria by which to measure outcomes for social policy.

Required Readings:


*Six Theories about How Policy Change Happens.*


Class 3

Human Rights as a Frame for Policy Practice: Students will understand the definition of human rights, their origin, and understand how human rights concepts can be used to evaluate social policy.

Required Readings:


*Assignment 1 *Social Policy Description Due.
Class 4
Introduction to the Role of Government in Social Welfare Policy and Political Philosophies
Underlying Social Policy Analysis

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading
Additional readings on classic theorists and their ideas can be found online in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy: www.iep.utm.edu/.

Class 5
The Role of the Judicial Branch in Social Welfare Policy: Students will learn about the role of the Judicial Branch of the government in social policy. Specific implications for social work policy analysis and advocacy will be addressed.

Required Readings:
Class 6
The Role of Advocacy in the Legislative Policy Process
Students will learn the importance of testifying in legislative committee hearings at local, state and federal levels. Students will learn techniques for testifying.

Required Reading:


Class 7
Emerging Social Policy Trends
Students will learn and discuss trending ideas in social policy including Social Impact Bonds, Big Data, Coordinated Assessment and apply Gil’s Framework to these emerging trends to understand how these trends impact social work and the people served by the profession.


Class 8

The Economics of Public Policy Analysis (Part 1)
An introduction to understanding the role of economics in social policy, including an overview of Keynesian economics vs. classical economics.

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:
Students should find an article to share in class that demonstrates the course content. Selected articles also may be distributed by the instructor.

*Assignment 2 – Literature Review Due Today*

Class 9

The Economics of Public Policy Analysis (Part 2)
Students will continue learning about key economic concepts, particularly market failures and government intervention and the economics of poverty.

Required Readings:


*Assignment 3 Due*
Class 10
The Economics of Public Policy Analysis (Part 3) In concluding the economics of public policy analysis, we will examine different ways to resolve some policy disagreements and opportunities within the market economy.

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Class 11
The Role of Budgetary Considerations in Policy Analysis

Required Reading:
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2015). Retrieved from:
http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/funding-for-housing-health-and-social-services-block-grants-has-fallen

*Legislative Hearing Critique Due*

Class 12
Advocacy: Making a Change

Required Reading:


Class 13
Student Presentations (time range of 10-15 minutes per student including Q and A)

Class 14
Student Presentations (time range of 10-15 minutes per student including Q and A)