I. COURSE PURPOSE:

From a social developmental perspective, this course critically examines social welfare policies in the United States. Building on knowledge and experience gained from master’s level studies and the practice of social work, this course provides students the opportunity to analyze the relationship between social work values, societal values, alternative social philosophies, and contemporary social policies designed to support and protect individuals, families and communities. The competing influences of political, economic, legal, religious and public media systems as well as the influence of social science research on policy formulation will be considered. Although primary emphasis in this course will be placed on domestic policies and their impact on intended target populations, attention will be given to new and emerging issues surrounding human rights, globalization and the impact of United States policies on the world order.

Poverty in the United States is of central concern to social workers engaged in social policy work. Many other social problems are contextualized by and contribute to poverty. In this course, students will be confronted with the challenge of examining poverty in the US and the adequacy or lack thereof of anti-poverty policies. Given significant gaps in social policy, students will work together throughout the course to identify those gaps and find policy responses that would provide for more efficacious policy responses to poverty.

An important by-product of this course is the student’s opportunity to begin conceptualizing how to teach social policy practice to MSW and BSW students. Students in the course will be charged with creating a mock course syllabus they would use in a foundation level or generalist social policy course. As part of this process, students will be challenged to identify and critique learning theories towards development of a teaching philosophy useful in their future career as an academician.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will demonstrate ability to:

1. Apply the theory of social development to social problems;
2. Critically analyze social policies using Bardach’s “Eightfold Path” model;
3. Explain poverty in the United States, its causes and consequences;
4. Apply theories of power to the critique of anti-poverty policies and programs in the US;
5. Identify and utilize data from social science databases, as well as from government and NGO sites in the analysis of social policies;
6. Create a course syllabus for delivery of a social policy course at the foundational or generalist social work level.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts: Required texts may be acquired through the CUA Bookstore or via a web-based book vendor. In the case of journal articles, students are expected to locate the material via the CUA Library search systems.


News of the Day: In addition to course readings, students need to read one national newspaper each day, either in paper format or via the internet. Students must be prepared to discuss noteworthy news in class each week that has unfolded the week prior to class. Students are expected to be fully informed and participatory in these discussions.

B. Recommended Texts


C. Internet Resources

Catholic Social Teaching
USCCB Seven Themes of CST

Advocacy
Catholic Charities USA http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/
Charity Lobbying for the Public Interest http://www.clpi.org
OMB Watch http://www.ombwatch.org

Government
First Government http://www.firstgov.gov
Thomas @ Library of congress http://thomas.loc.gov
United States Census Bureau http://www.census.gov
US Senate http://senate.gov
White House http://www.whitehouse.gov

Policy Research
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities http://www.cbpp.org
Moving Ideas: Electronic Polity Network http://moving ideas.org
Urban Institute http://www.urban.org
Brookings Institution http://www.brook.edu
Institute for Research on Poverty http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp
Economic Policy Institute http://www.epi.org

D. Course Assignments

Social Policy Analysis Paper (60% of semester grade)

Applying the theory of social development, and following Bardach’s model of policy analysis, the student will propose an anti-poverty policy that addresses one cause or one result of poverty. The paper is due November 30, 2014 at 5:00 PM and will be submitted via electronic email in Microsoft Word. Students must follow APA formatting throughout the paper.

Fatal Error Policy: An assignment submitted in this course that has more than three grammatical, syntactical and/or citation errors on any give page will be assigned a grade
of zero. The paper will be returned to the student for correction and resubmission. The highest grade the rewritten paper will then be awarded is a B+ (85 points). If the resubmitted paper violates the fatal error policy, the paper will be assigned a grade of zero.

Note: Assignments completed for this course must be of the highest standards and rigors expected of a doctoral student. No late assignments will be accepted, regardless of reason. If a paper is submitted beyond the due date and time, it will receive a grade of zero. Students are advised to work methodically on the assignment across the semester.

Anti-Poverty Social Policy Course Syllabus (40% of semester grade)

The student will create a syllabus for a BSW level social policy course focused on anti-poverty policy. The parts of the syllabus that must be included are, at a minimum:

1. Title of the Course
2. Course Description
3. Student Learning Outcomes
4. Required Reading
5. Suggested Reading
6. Suggested Websites
7. Instructor’s Teaching Philosophy
8. Course Assignments
9. Course Outline
10. Assignment Evaluation Guidelines

The syllabus is due November 30, 2014 at 5:00 PM and will be submitted via electronic email in Microsoft Word. Students must follow APA formatting throughout the assignment. Copying other syllabi, in whole or part, either that exist electronically or in paper format, will be considered an act of plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.

Fatal Error Policy: An assignment submitted in this course that has more than three grammatical, syntactical and/or citation errors on any give page will be assigned a grade of zero. The paper will be returned to the student for correction and resubmission. The highest grade the rewritten paper will then be awarded is a B+ (85 points). If the resubmitted paper violates the fatal error policy, the paper will be assigned a grade of zero.

Note: Assignments completed for this course must be of the highest standards and rigors expected of a doctoral student. No late assignments will be accepted, regardless of reason. If a paper is submitted beyond the due date and time, it will receive a grade of zero. Students are advised to work methodically on the assignment across the semester.
E. Instructor’s Teaching Philosophy

I apply adult learning theory (see the work of Malcom Shepherd Knowles) and social construction theory (see the work of Ian Hacking and others) to teaching social policy to doctoral students. Thus, I hold high expectations that students will be engaged in learning, both their own and that of others in the course, because of its benefits, not due to some perceived coercion on my part. The course will not succeed if students view themselves as mere students sitting in chairs absorbing what I have to offer. Rather, and importantly, it is the student her or himself that is the instructor and all of us in the course learners. The knowledge, experience, skills, character and values you bring to the classroom is as instructive and crucial as anything I might bring. Therefore, it goes without saying, attendance and participation is an act of investment by the student in other students and me as the instructor for our edification. We all must complete reading assignments in advance of class sessions, be completely apprised of news of the day, and arrive at class energized to engage each other in the rhetoric of policy discourse.

Discussing poverty and social policy often involves reflecting on and expressing personal values. Those values will naturally be divergent in a class of adult learners. Doctoral students in the NCSSS are expected to uphold the NASW Code of Ethics in engaging with each other, even and especially in intense political discourse. Respect and regard of others is absolutely necessary for us to learn from one another in this course.

F. Grading

Assignments will be evaluated based on the matrices in the appendices of this syllabus.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

This course is divided into four components: The Nature of Poverty; Reasons for Poverty; Effects of Poverty; Anti-Poverty Policy. Throughout the course, students will explore values of American society, historical and contemporary, that shape responses to poverty, as well as their own values that will guide them in their anti-poverty policy work. The application of the theory of social development will be examined in each component of the course.

Unit 1: Introduction to Course

Required Reading


Unit 2: Nature of Poverty

Required Reading

Explore trends in poverty at US Census Bureau


**Unit 3: Reasons for Poverty**

**Required Reading**


**Unit 4: Effects of Poverty**


**Unit 5: Anti-Poverty Policy**


