I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course will provide students with a framework for advanced policy analysis and strategies for policy change in order to support practice with troops, veterans, and their families. The course will focus on military and veteran programs and systems and will build upon the concepts and themes explored in SSS593. The course emphasizes military culture and lifestyle and introduces students to historical policies and programs impacting veterans’ health care and benefits. Special emphasis is placed on family studies and literature emerging from Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) documenting the impact of sustained, overseas efforts on military family functioning, and the dynamics of transitioning or returning veterans. This course takes into account the effects of repeated, extended separation, as well as active duty and veterans’ physical, psychological, and cognitive injury, and examines how policies and programs can be developed to ensure the provisions of seamless, quality services to a deserving population. Students will examine the policies, programs, and services that contribute to military and veterans’ family health and well-being and will be introduced to past and present issues and themes that impact service members, veterans, and their families. Students are encouraged to consider how a social work approach may be particularly beneficial in responding to the complex and evolving needs of today’s military and veterans’ families.

II. ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, the student should also be able to:

1. Identify the principles, foundation, and provisions of the primary social welfare programs that affect military and veteran families.
2. Demonstrate core, foundational knowledge of the military and veteran systems, institutional structures, programs, and resources in order to optimally prepare students for roles as professional social workers within a military and veteran environment.

3. Demonstrate the analytic, theoretical, and value assessment skills that enable social workers to evaluate policies and apply change strategies.

4. Critically examine relevant scholarly literature to engage in active discussion on behalf of active duty military and veteran families.

5. Critically analyze policy decisions that have played influential roles in the health and wellbeing of military and veteran families across time and historical context.

6. Apply concepts and principles of human rights, social justice, and social work ethics to policy analysis, development, and change strategies.

7. Identify the primary systems that form the safety net for military personnel, veterans, and their families, including (a) health, mental health and substance abuse, (b) housing, (c) education and employment training, (d) income support, and (e) family services.

8. Analyze ways in which policies affecting military and veteran families have evolved from and are rooted in military culture.

9. Analyze policies that affect service men and women of varying races and ethnicities, sexual orientations, and family structures, as well as hierarchical and bureaucratic structures of services.

10. Describe avenues for leadership, advocacy, and policy change related to social work intervention with military and veteran families.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Reading


B. Recommended Reading

C. Other Recommended Resources and Media
   Department of Defense website, [www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)
   VA website, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
   Veterans Benefits, [www.vba.va.gov/VBA/](http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/)
   USO, [www.uso.org](http://www.uso.org)
   Legislative and policy data sources, [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov)
D. **Course Assignments**

The assignments for this course consist of active class participation on a daily basis, an advocacy critique of military or veteran hearing testimony, a formal group presentation to peers, and a scholarly paper. Additional assignment details, expectations, and guidelines will be presented in class at the beginning of the semester. Students will have an opportunity to ask questions to clarify focus and scope of the respective assignment. See outline below for due dates and grading policy.

The first assignment introduces the student to Congressional Military and Veterans Hearing Testimony. The student must observe a hearing of an Armed Services Committee, Committee on Veterans Affairs, or related Sub-Committee hearing to gain deeper insight into a respective policy issue. It is preferred that the student observed the hearing in-person, but the hearing may be viewed via online video if in-person viewing cannot be arranged. In response to the student observation, the student will be asked to critique the hearing for potential impact to military or veteran wellbeing. Assignment one is due class five, and further guidelines for analysis will be provided in class. The critique should be 5-7 pages in length and should follow standards from APA, version 6, for scholarly writing.

The second assignment is a group project. Students will organize into small groups and be tasked to create and develop a military, veteran, or family service program. The assignment is comprised of five main components: framing the selected issue, researching and analyzing existing policy (if any) related to the selected issue, creating and developing a services program to address the issue while supporting existing policy or advocating for new policy, establishing criteria and a measurement plan to evaluate the program empirically, and educating and marketing the program to an audience (peers) through a well-organized presentation (45 minutes in length). Assignment two is due class 9 and further directions will be provided in class.

The third assignment is a scholarly paper (12 – 14 pages in length). The student must select, research, and analyze a military or veterans social policy. The student should select a topic that emerges from the group project so that assignments two and three are linked. In support of the analysis, the scholarly paper should include an historical account of the issue and policy, qualitative and quantitative data and statistics, and content on future advocacy for policy change and implementation. Further guidelines for analysis of the policy will be provided and discussed in class. Assignment three is due class 14 and should follow standards from APA, version 6, for writing scholarly papers. In addition, students will be asked to brief their final policy papers to their peers on the last day of class. The student briefing task will be graded as a portion of the student’s overall class participation grade and a presenting format for the briefing will be discussed in advance.

Active class participation will be assessed and comprise the fourth component of the student’s grade.
E. Grading Policy and Weights of Assignments
Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the *Graduate Announcements*. Full credit will not be given for assignments that are submitted late. **No credit will be given for assignments submitted after they have been reviewed in class.** The following provides weights for the various course assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
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F. Preparation, Attendance & Participation
Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises and online forums as required. The class participation grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students will make different kinds of contributions. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions while others will be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued.

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 requests.
V. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and behavioral requirements.

NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members - including students, faculty, administrators, and staff – strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society, it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences will arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur – inside or outside of the classroom - we agree to engage in respectful and productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. Scholastic Expectations
All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Behavioral Requirements:
Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:

- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
- Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
- Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

C. 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 (http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgrt.cfm) and appropriate Program Handbooks.

D. Confidentiality
Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement that is signed at the beginning of every semester. This agreement covers “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within
the NCSSS BSW or MSW programs are for **professional learning purposes only** and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation.

Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. I will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.

E. **Accommodations**
   Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, you must present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

F. **Use of Electronic Devices** *(faculty agreed it is up to each instructor to allow or disallow laptops)*
   No laptops or other electronic devices are permitted in the classroom, unless you have a specific documented learning disability. Please turn off all cell phones or other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom and put them away and removed from the classroom environment.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>TOPIC AND READINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the Course and DOD &amp; VA Systems; Course overview, expectations, assignments, and students’ learning goals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korb et al: Chapter 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Longman: Preface to Third Edition &amp; Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blasure et al.: Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ideology of Context, Culture, and Structure: Identifying contextual meaning of serving one’s country, navigating hierarchical and bureaucratic systems, and finding the place for wellbeing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Korb et al: Chapter 3</td>
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</table>
Longman: Chapter 7


**Recommended Readings**
Blaisure et al.: Chapters 1 – 3

Longman: Chapter 4 & 5


### 3 High-Profile Policy Issues: Historical overview for policy development impacting military members, veterans, and their families

**Required Readings**
Korb et al: Chapter 4 & 6

Longman: Chapter 1


**Recommended Readings**
Blaisure et al.: Chapters 1 – 3

Longman: Chapters 2 & 10


### 4 Introduction to Benefits and Support Programs: Examining the impact for Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), the United Services Organization (USO), and military base resources for morale, welfare, and recreation

(Guest Presenter: Local VSO Representative, TBA)

**Required Readings**
Korb et al: Chapter 5
Longman: Chapter 8


**Recommended Readings**
Blasure et al.: Chapters 9, 10 & 12


5

**Policies Related to Deployment & Reintegration**

**Required Readings**
Korb et al: Chapter 5


**Recommended Readings**
Blasure et al.: Chapters 6, 7 & 8


**ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE CLASS 5**

6

**The Health Care Safety Net**

**Required Readings**
Korb et al: Chapters 5 & 6

Longman: Chapter 5


**Recommended Readings**
Blasure et al.: Chapters 9 & 10


7  The Health Care Safety Net: Continued; Group Presentation Meeting Time

**Required Readings**
Longman: Chapters 6 & 10


8  Policy Issues Specific to Women’s Health; Group Presentation Meeting Time

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Group Presentations**

**ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE CLASS 9**

**Congressional Decision Making, Benefits from a Researcher’s Perspective, and The Family Caregiver Act.**

(Guest Presenter: Congressional Research Service, TBA)

**Required Readings**

Korb et al.: Chapter 4


**11 Violence across the Military & Veteran Workplace**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Policy Related to Diversity & Equal Opportunity**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


13 **Diversity & Leadership: Future Needs Perspective through the Lens of a Military Service Member/Veteran.**

(Guest Presenter: Military Service Member/Veteran, TBA)

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


14 **The Need for Future Advocacy & Policy, Final Review, and Course Wrap-up.**

**Required Readings**

Korbet al: Chapter 7
Longman: Chapter 11


**Recommended Readings**


**ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE CLASS 14**