SSS 831
Advanced Social Policy Analysis
Spring, 2011
(3 credits)

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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. COURSE PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical approach to this course draws from concepts underlying adult learning theory, in particular, andragogy, as examined by Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005). Andragogy recognizes the ability of the adult learner to engage in self-directed learning that is not wholly dependent on lecture content from the instructor. However, the andragogical approach is blended with the more traditional pedagogical teaching methods (e.g., instructor-led class lectures). Students are expected to take the content from this course and pursue it in a fashion that is most meaningful to them. Students will be exposed to some concepts of the jurisprudential teaching model (Joyce, Weil and Calhoun, 2002) for the purpose of navigating the often contentious and opposing views of social policy development in the political environment, as well as preparing them to recognize, value and articulate divergent viewpoints.

III. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To 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. To understand the classic 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. To understand the historical, cultural, ethical, and shifting political, economic, and juridical contexts of policy analysis.

4. To understand the determinants of the public social policy process, including agenda-setting and policy subsystem engagement.

5. To understand how to utilize program performance information and to analyze the political and organizational structures in which it is embedded.

6. To understand the role and functioning of judicial processes on social policy formulation and monitoring.

7. To understand the role and ethical responsibilities of social workers who engage in policy analysis in their employing organizations.

8. To understand the importance of human rights as a frame for measuring social policy outcomes for diverse populations and populations-at-risk.

9. To demonstrate the ability to apply political and economic concepts to policy analysis and policy advocacy.

10. To demonstrate ability to use the resources of the world wide web (WWW) in the conduct of a policy analysis.
IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts

Amidei, N. (2002). *So you want to make a difference?: Advocacy is key*. Washington, D.C.: OMBWatch (If unavailable, instructor will provide access to copies)


B. Recommended Texts


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.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)) and the Administration for Children and Families ([www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)) provide information and statistics. Policy organizations, such as the Brookings Institute ([www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.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 Conference of Catholic Bishops ([www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.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)); The Sunlight Foundation ([http://sunlightfoundation.com](http://sunlightfoundation.com)); 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 five 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 also will be asked 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 probably will be most beneficial if students relate the readings to current social policy happenings, social work practice, or social work history. Students are expected to read a national paper daily or listen to national news shows to keep abreast of current events. Questions will be selected on a random basis for discussion. This activity is included as part of the attendance and participation grade.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Policy Description Paper</td>
<td>Class 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rights, Economic, and Political Assessment Paper</td>
<td>Class 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Policy Analysis Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>Classes 13 – 14</td>
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Grading Policy

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Social Policy Description Paper</td>
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<td>Rights, Economic, Political Assessment Paper</td>
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<td>Final Policy Analysis Paper</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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E. **Attendance and Participation**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. The instructor must be notified in advance (except in emergencies) of a planned absence. Unexcused absences will result in a deduction from the student’s class participation grade. While the instructor recognizes the student’s ability to learn independently, she believes that class discussion is an important and integral part of the learning experience. Students are expected to contribute to classroom learning by coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and sharing their observations and applications of policy/macro practice to their placement and/or employment settings.

F. **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 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**

A. **Scholastic Expectations**

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. 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 be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. **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.

C. **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, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

D. **Timeliness of Assignments**

All assignments must be submitted on their due dates, with rare exceptions given at the discretion of the instructor. Papers will be marked down 1 point for every day they are turned in late.
Class Schedule

**Class 1**

**Topics and Readings**

**Introduction and Overview of the Course, and Policy Models**

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 learn the stages of the policy cycle and review the role of actors and institutions in the policy subsystem.

**Required Readings**


(Also available online at NASW website.)

**Recommended Readings**


**Class 2**

**The Policy Universe: Actors, Institutions, and the Policy Agenda-Setting Process**

Students will understand the major actors and institutions in the policy universe and how they interact throughout the policy life-cycle. 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


3 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


4 *(Social Policy Description Due)
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


5 Introduction to the Role of Government in Social Welfare Policy

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:

6 Political Philosophies Underlying Social Policy Analysis
Students will review and discuss competing political philosophies toward the role of government in the provision of social welfare.

Required Readings


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

7 Federalism, “New Federalism” and State and Local Policy Making
Students will review and discuss competing how policy is made in our system(s) of government.

Required Readings
Selected articles to be distributed by the instructor.
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

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:

Additional readings may be assigned

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:
Schiller, B.R. (2008). The economics of poverty and discrimination (10th

11 Advocacy: Making a Change

Required Reading


Recommended Readings
TBD

12 *Right, Economic and Political Analysis Due Today

Tax Policy
Students will be introduced to the importance of tax policy in social policy.

Required Reading
TBD

13 Course Wrap Up and Testimonies

*Final Papers Due by Noon on Wednesday, April 20, 2011