SOW 5235.01: Social Welfare Policies and Services

Course Statement: Social welfare is a complex, controversial, and intriguing system misunderstood by the body politic. This course, SOW 5235, explores the nature of social welfare, its policies, programs, and services. Additionally, the focus includes how the social welfare system impacts, directly and indirectly, clients, services providers, and the community at-large.

In order for the class to be a successful learning experience, all must become an active participant in the classroom process. In this investment, our beliefs will be challenged as we search for what is just - the goal of the academic community is to stretch the human intellect, stimulate creativity, and be exposed to and develop an appreciation for diversity.

The Council on Social Work Education's "Curriculum Policy" for educational programs provides direction for policy courses. The Council writes that "students are expected to develop skills in the use and application of scientific knowledge to the analysis and development of social welfare policies and services. They should know the structure of service programs and the history of the organized profession and other social welfare institutions. Social work students should also gain an understanding of the political process and the means to further the achievement of social work goals and purposes."

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, when given the opportunity, the student will:
1. Conceptually define social welfare, social services, and social work; further, the student will identify and discuss the differences between these areas and the extent of their interaction.
2. Identify and discuss how policy contributes to and is influenced by social functioning; social stress; social support; empowerment; and, shared responsibility.
3. Identify a model for policy analysis and demonstrate its application to a current social program and social issue.
4. Identify various institutional and residual functions of social welfare as a societal institution.
5. Identify significant historical events in the evolution of American social welfare; additionally, the student will identify philosophical themes and behavioral patterns in American social welfare history with particular focus on selected vulnerable population groups.
6. Identify the relevance of social policy in the delivery of public and private services.
7. Identify necessary social work practice skills and theory required for effective participation in the political process.
8. Identify the role of values and ethics in the formulation and implementation of social policy.
9. Identify policy strategies that promote economic and social justice in particular for women, African-Americans, Gays and Lesbians, and Hispanics.
10. Continue the development of the use-of-self in the social work process.

Text:
Assignments
1. **Policy as Process (50 pts)** - Prepare a *process analysis* of a federal social welfare policy: A detailed description of this assignment is attached. The instructor will provide detailed directions. The expected length is 20 pages. Use APA format. **Due week 12**

   Note: In second year/advanced policy, SOW 6246 – Policy Analysis and Social Change, you will have *policy as performance* assignment - how the policy is interpreted and implemented at the local/community level. You may want to keep this in mind as you select the policy you will analyze.

2. **Mid term exam – 25 pts (week 8)**

3. **Final exam - 25 pts (week 15)**

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   **Attendance is expected.** More than 3 absences (excused or unexcused) results in a loss of a letter grade from your final. Use your absences wisely!

   **Class Policies:** See the MSW Student Handbook

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1** Course Introduction and overview, review of assignments
Review
1. CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement
2. NASW Code of Ethics

**Week 2**
Social Welfare Policy and Services: Overview and definitions of terms and concepts
Policy as Process, Product and Performance
Readings
- DiNitto (text): Ch. 1 - Politics, rationalism and social welfare

**Week 3**
Readings
- DiNitto (text) Ch. 12 – Implementing and evaluating social welfare policy: What happens after a law is passed?

**Weeks 4 & 5**
Historical Perspective and the Evolution of Social Welfare: Elizabethan Poor Law
Early Welfare in the U.S., the Great Depression and the New Deal, the War on Poverty and the Great Society and Welfare Reform.
Readings
- DiNitto (text) Ch. 2 – Government and social welfare
Weeks 6 & 7
Defining Poverty, Preventing Poverty, and the Social Insurance Programs
Readings
• DiNitto (text) Ch. 3 – Defining poverty: Where to begin<; Ch. 4 – Preventing Poverty: The Social Insurance Programs

Week 8      Mid-term Exam

Week 9      Poverty and America – Causes, Solutions and Recent Welfare Reforms
Readings
• DiNitto (text) Ch. 5 – Helping the “Deserving Poor”: Aged, Blind, and Disabled

Weeks 10 & 11
America’s Response to Social Welfare – Hunger, Health, Mental Illness, Services to Children, Older Adult, People with Disabilities, the Correctional System.
Readings
• DiNitto (text) Ch. 6 – Ending welfare as we knew it: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; Ch. 7 – Fighting hunger – Nutrition, policy and programs in the U.S.; Ch. 8 – Improving healthcare: Treating the nation’s ills; Ch. 10 – Providing social services – Help for children, the elderly and people with mental illness.

Week 12      Social Policy Responses to Racism and Sexism in the United States
Readings
• DiNitto (text) Ch. 11 – Challenging social welfare: Racism and sexism

Week 13 & 14
Class Presentations on Policy as Process legislative analysis assignments

Week 15      Final Exam
Bibliography: Social Welfare Policies and Services


Clark, B.K., & Abeles, N. (1994). Ethical issues and dilemmas in the mental health organization. Administration and Policy in Mental Health 22(1): 7-17


