SOW 5235.02 - Social Welfare Policies and Issues

Course Statement: Social welfare is a complex, controversial, and intriguing system misunderstood. This course explores the nature of social welfare, its policies, programs, and services. Additionally, the focus includes how the social welfare system influences, 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, "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.
Textbooks:

Assignments:
Policy as Process: Prepare a *process analysis* of a federal social welfare policy: A detailed description of this assignment will be given to you in class. The expected length is 20-25 pages. Use APA format. **Due week 12**

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Attendance is expected: More than three absences (excused or unexcused) will result in a loss of a letter grade from your final. Use your absences wisely!

Class Policies: See the MSW Student Handbook

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1
Course introduction and overview, explanation of assignments, and introduction to critical thinking.
1. CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement
2. NASW Code of Ethics
3. Critical thinking basics

Session 2
Social Policy and the American Welfare State
Introduction to Policy Research
Social Institutions
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapters 1 & 2
Bellah, Introduction, and Chapter 1

Session 3
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapter 3

Session 4
Discrimination in American Society
The Rise and Fall of the American Century
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapter 4
Bellah, Chapter 2
Session 5
Poverty in America
The Political Economy: Market and Work
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapter 4
Bellah, Chapter 3

Session 6
Test 1

Session 7
The Voluntary Sector, Privatization, and Human Service Corporations
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapters 6 & 7

Session 8
The Making of Governmental Policy
Tax Policy and Income Distribution
Government, Law, and Politics
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapters 8 & 9
Bellah, Chapter 4

Session 9
Social Insurance Programs
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapters 10

Session 10
Public Assistance Programs
Issues in Welfare Reform
Education
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapter 11
Bellah, Chapter 5

Session 11 Test 2

Session 12
The American Health Care System
Comparative Analysis: Health Care in Canada and Britain
The Public Church
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapter 12
Bellah, Chapter 6

Session 13
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy
Criminal Justice and Social Work
America in the World
Democracy Means Paying Attention
Readings: Karger & Stoesz, Chapters 13 & 14
Bellah, Chapter 7, and Conclusion

Session 14
Thanksgiving Holiday!!
Session 15
Child Welfare Policy
Housing Policies
Food Policy
The American Welfare State in Perspective
Readings: Karger and Stoesz, Chapter 15, 16, 17, & 18

Final Exam during Exam Week

Bibliography: Social Welfare Policies and Services

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