SOW 6246-0003: Policy Analysis and Social Change

Professor: R. Paul Maiden, Ph.D.  
Term: Spring 04  
Office: 204A  
Class Days: Monday  
Phone: 407-823-6167  
Class Hours: 4:30 – 6:20  
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Course Description: Study of urban problems, policies, and planning from the perspective of their impact on individuals and families.

This course builds on the foundation of understanding of the American social welfare system (SOW 5235), human behavior and social systems (SOW 5106), and generalist and clinical specialist practice (SOW 5106 and SOW 5306). Recognizing the inseparable link between community-based clinical and policy practice is fundamental in this course.

The purpose of the course is for students to develop knowledge and skill in small-scale policy practice so they can solve social problems that affect social stress and social functioning of clients, improve service responses to client populations, and promote economic and social justice. Students will gain analytic, process, and communication skills that have practical application for changing policies and programs in agency, community, or legislative settings. These skills are needed to inform, persuade, educate, and mobilize people to solve social problems and to translate values and policy goals into action.

The course provides a value-analytic approach to policy analysis and program development. It is grounded in social work theory, values, and first principles emphasizing membership, democratic participation, shared responsibility, and empowerment. A "bottom up" approach to social policy and program change for direct service professionals engaged in community-based clinical practice is also emphasized in the course.

Course Objectives: On completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Apply critical thinking, empirical findings, and content from previous courses in social welfare policy, practice, and human behavior to community problems and social service approaches, especially as they relate to populations at risk and diversity.
2. Identify the linkages between clinical and policy practice as well as the roles of professionals as shapers and implementers of social policy in community-based clinical practice.
3. Apply social work membership theory and principles of democracy to social problem analysis and to methods of agency, community, and social change.
4. Distinguish between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to policy planning and formulation.
5. Conduct small-scale policy analysis and policy hearings that have practical application in agency, community, or legislative settings, translates values and policy goals into programs of action, increases social support, and improves client social functioning.
6. Utilize a problem-solving model for mobilizing resources to solve social problems and to promote policy change and social justice from the "bottom up": from agency, to community, to regulatory and legislative settings.
7. Perform tasks for effective communication of policy analyses to community people needing to be informed, persuaded, or educated about a social problem.
Required Texts:

Required Readings: Students are encouraged to bring news items related to current social welfare policies and issues in the community and in state and federal government.


Evaluation of Learning and Grading: Each student brings many interests, talents, and learning needs to this class experience. As adult learners, students are expected to keep up with reading assignments, attend class, and participate in class discussions.

Attendance is expected. More than 3 absences results in a loss of 5 grade points per absence.

Late assignments – Deduction of 1 full letter grade per week past assigned due date.

The final course grade is computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>Grading Scheme</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (mid term and final)</td>
<td>50% (25% each)</td>
<td>Week 8 (mid) &amp; 15 (final)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to a legislator</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Anytime between week 2 &amp; 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Same as above assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy “Performance” Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Grading Scheme

A  94>; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F below 60

Letter to a State or National Legislator - During this semester you should read and monitor human service/social welfare issues (homelessness, child welfare, discrimination, domestic and community violence, etc.) in the media. Pick an issue and write a letter of concern, support or opposition to your state or national representative or senator. You will read your letter in class and you must mail it. Any response you receive should also be shared with the class.

Letter to the Editor – Follow the same guidelines as the above assignment but pick a different issue and write an opinion/editorial to the editor of the Orlando Sentinel. You will read your op/ed letter to the class and you must mail it. We will look for you “in print”.

“Policy as Performance” Analysis Paper: Students will choose and conduct a performance analysis of a single program or policy (see Gilbert and Terrell text, p 14-19). Students may consult with their field supervisor and/or any other relevant agency personnel in the selection of the program/policy to be evaluated, with the approval from the course instructor for the topic selection. Students may also do a “policy performance analysis” of the same piece of legislation for which they did a “policy process analysis” in their first year policy course (assuming the policy has been enacted for a sufficient period of time to produce performance data (student must show first year policy paper to instructor for approval).
The purpose of this paper is to provide students with an opportunity to develop policy practice knowledge and skills in agency, community, or legislative settings. Students are to work on their papers individually.

Note: With the approval of your instructor, you can do a performance analysis of the legislation for which you did a process analysis in BSW or 1st year MSW policy. Be prepared to show your earlier policy process paper to your instructor.

The policy analysis paper includes: 1) describing the chosen program/policy, 2) evaluating its effectiveness and “performance”; 3) providing suggestions for improvements to the program/policy. The length of the paper should average 20-25 pages APA style. This paper is due week 12. More details in class.

Course Outline:

Unit 1: THE NATURE OF POLICY PRACTICE AND POLICY ADVOCACY

Week 1 Overview of course, course requirements, student expectations and readings.

Week 2 and 3 Policy as a Rational Choice
- Why social workers must engage in policy advocacy
- Ethical, political and analytical rationale for policy practice

Required Readings:
- Jansson text: Ch. 1 Joining a tradition of social reform; Ch. 2 Articulating four rationales for participating for policy advocacy
- Gilbert and Terrell text: Ch. 1 The Field of social welfare policy; Ch. 2 The modern welfare state; Ch. 4: The basis of social allocations.

Week 4 and 5 Skills, Task and Action in Social Policy
- Skills and tasks for policy practice (analytical, political, interactional, and value changing and value-changing skills)
- Differences between skills and tasks

Required Readings
- Jansson text. Ch. 3 Obtaining skills and competence for policy advocacy; Ch 4 Understanding the ecology of policy in governmental, electoral, community and agency settings.
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 3 A framework for social welfare policy analysis.

Unit 2: PUTTING POLICY ADVOCACY PRACTICE INTO ACTION

Week 6 Building a Policy Agenda and Social Problem Analysis
- The agenda building process and stages of agenda building
- Using data, quantitative and qualitative research to capture the nature of the problem
- Clarifying the complex nature of social problems
- Identifying determinants to projects program effectiveness

Required Readings:
- Jansson, text. Ch 5 Committing to an Issue: Building agenda, Ch. 6 Committing to a solution: Analyzing problems
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 5 The nature of social provision
Week 7  **Policy Options and Proposals**
- The scope of policy options – establishing a mission, designing the structure of service, defining services rationing scarce resources,
- Policy proposal development – Agency or legislative
- Identifying options for problem solving
- Constructing a written policy proposal
- Making persuasive presentations

**Required readings:**
- Jansson text. Ch. 7 Developing policy proposals; Ch 8 Presenting and defending policy proposals
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 6 The design of the delivery system

Week 8  **MID TERM EXAM**

**Unit 3: POLICY ADVOCACY WITHIN THE POLITICAL ARENA**

Week 9 and 10  **Understanding “Power” and Politics and Knowing How to Use It**
- Definitions of “power” and politics
- The nature of power
- Power resources, power process and indirect power
- Establishing personal credibility
- Networking
- Problems of “out groups” in using power
- Task groups and coalitions

**Required Reading:**
- Jansson text. Ch. 9 Developing and using power.
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 7 The mode of finance: Source of funds

Weeks 11 & 12  **Developing Political Strategy and Taking Political Action**
- Creating political strategies in agencies, communities, and legislative settings
- Evaluating the strength of support and opposition
- Contextual factors
- Situational factors
- Steps in formulating and evaluating political strategies
- Construction of a policy or program proposal
- Who presents?
- Essential characteristics of credible policy presentations
- Different formats of policy presentations
- Delivery of an effective oral testimony
- How to develop a position paper, memorandum, policy letter, or news release
- Testifying before a legislative committee
- Writing a letter to a legislator
- Writing a letter to a newspaper

**Required Reading:**
- Jansson text. Ch. 10 Developing political strategy, Ch. 11 Putting political strategy into action, Ch. 12 Engaging in ballot-based policy advocacy
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 8 The mode of finance: Systems of transfer.
Unit 4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Week 13 and 14  Framework for Implementing Policy and Assessing Policy Implementation
- The implementing organization: Structure and staff
- The implementation process
- Policy assessment process
- Differentiating between assessing and analyzing policy and policy assessment and policy debates
- Program evaluation/outcome (Process and Outcome)

Required Reading
- Jansson text. Ch. 13 Troubleshooting policies, Ch 14 Assessing policies
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 9 Who plans? Choices in the process of policy formulation

Week 15  FINAL EXAM