Course Description: The 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 policy practice and advocacy so they can solve social problems that affect the social stress level 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.

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 a small-scale policy analysis and policy hearing that have practical application in agency, community, or legislative settings, translate 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 to 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:

Course Policies:  See the School of Social Work Student Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students. In addition, cell phones are to be turned off during class. If you are in a job that requires you to be available or you are a parent, turn your phone to vibrate so it does not disturb the class.

If any student has a disability that requires special consideration, they need to be registered with the Office of Student Disabilities and to furnish the instructor with verification of registration with OSD by the end of the second week of classes. No consideration can be given for a disability without verification from OSD.

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 two (2) absences results in a loss of 5 grade points per absence.

Late assignments. Deduction of one (1) full letter grade per week past assigned due date.

The final course grade will be based on the following assignments:

- Essay 1 15%
- Essay 2 15%
- Essay 3 15%
- Letter to the Editor 5%
- Op-Ed Essay 10%
- Letter to Legislato 5%
- Paper 35%

Grading Scale
A 94 - 100; 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

Assignments:
During the semester, there are three essays, a letter to a legislator, a letter to the editor, an op/ed essay, and a paper. Directions for these assignments will be given during the semester.

Course Outline

Week 1
- Review of syllabus and course expectations.
- Introduction to political and policy advocacy.

Week 2
- The role of social work in policy advocacy.
- How social work values shape our policy advocacy.
Readings: Haynes & Mickelson: Forward, chapters 1-4
Jansson: Preface, chapters 1-2
Week 3
• Policy practice and policy advocacy framework.
• Dealing with cynicism – your own and others.
• Practitioner influence on policy.
Readings: Haynes & Mickelson: Chapters 4-5
          Jansson: Chapters 3-4
Assignment Due: Essay 1

Week 4
• Agenda building.
• Challenges in agenda building.
Readings: Jansson: Chapter 5
Assignment Due: Letter to the Editor

Week 5
• Analyzing social problems.
• Developing interventions and programs.
Readings: Haynes & Mickelson: Chapters 6-7
          Jansson: Chapter 6
Handout

Week 6
• Developing policy proposals.
• Policy proposal skills.
Readings: Haynes & Mickelson: Chapters 8-9
          Jansson: Chapter 7
Assignment Due: Essay 2

Week 7
• Presenting and defending policy proposals.
• Writing an op/ed essay.
Reading: Jansson: Chapter 8

Week 8
• Power.
• Types of power.
• Developing and using power.
Reading: Jansson: Chapter 9

Week 9
• Political Strategy
Reading: Haynes & Mickelson Chapters 10-11
          Jansson: Chapter 10
• Assignment Due: Op/ed essay
Week 10
- From strategy to action
- Settings for action
Reading: Jansson: Chapter 11

Week 11
- Ballot-based advocacy
- Deciding to run for office
Reading: Haynes & Mickelson: Chapter 11
           Jansson: Chapter 12
- Assignment Due: Policy Analysis Paper

Week 12
- Social workers as politicians
- Realities
- Social work values as a base for decision-making
Reading: Haynes & Mickelson: Chapters 12-13
Assignment Due: Letter to a legislator

Week 13
- Troubleshooting and assessing policies
- Framework for implementation
- Evaluating policies
Reading: Jansson: Chapters 13-14

Week 14
- Catch up week