

**ECSU SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM MISSION**

The Social Work Program of Eastern Connecticut State University prepares effective generalist social workers who advance human well-being, draw upon client strengths in practice, empower the oppressed, and are committed to the promotion of social justice.

**SWK 325 - SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY  
ON-LINE COURSE SYLLABUS**

(Draft – There may be minor changes prior to the beginning of the course)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

SWK 325 offers students an overview of the issues surrounding the development, implementation, and evaluation of social welfare policies. Within this course the term "social welfare policies" includes decisions made about how social problems should be addressed and the desired outcomes of those efforts.

This is an on-line three credit course scheduled June 1 through July 9. This is not a self-paced course. Not counting Sundays and July 4, there are 33 days to cover the material. Though some flexibility is built into the course schedule, there are fixed dates for assignments, chats (on-line discussion sessions), quizzes, and tests which must be met. Careful adherence to the course schedule will be essential to success in the course.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course, each student will be able to:

1. Describe the historical roots of social welfare policy and the influence of traditional American values on social welfare policy today.
  - Demonstrate understanding of the influence of the Protestant work ethic, rugged individualism, and the conservative, liberal, and radical political perspectives on social welfare policy
  - Demonstrate understanding of the influence of capitalist ideals and free market economics on current social welfare policies.
  - Describe alternatives to current U.S. social policies such as provision of universal health care in Canada and Britain, the universalistic social welfare policy approaches taken in the Scandinavian countries and other modern welfare states, and utopian perspectives such as those described by Bellamy in *Looking Backward*.
2. Demonstrate understanding of our political and judicial systems and their roles in social welfare policy formation and implementation.
  - Demonstrate understanding of the impact of inequalities in power and influence and of the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups on policy formation.
  - Demonstrate awareness of political and other strategies for influencing the policy formation process and/or for bringing about policy change.
3. Demonstrate understanding of, and ability to apply, four policy analysis perspectives:
  - Historical analysis of the policy making process. How social welfare policies emerge beginning with the identification of social problems to be addressed, through consideration of policy alternatives, to

implementation, evaluation, and termination or revision of the policy product.

- Critical analysis of the policy product including the identification of policy beneficiaries, the nature of benefits delivered, the system for delivering benefits and the cost and financing of the policy.
  - Critical assessment of the performance of social welfare policies. Assessing the impact of social policies on the problems they are intended to address.
  - Anticipatory assessment of policy alternatives for dealing with current social problems.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the importance of social policy for social work practice and the ethical obligation of the social work profession to engage in social and political action to promote social and economic justice.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- There is no formal text. Some modules include readings which are posted on the SWK 325 on-line course site.
- All modules include statements of learning objectives and vocabulary. In addition, many modules include supplemental handouts. These are posted on the SWK 325 on-line course site and should be printed and reviewed prior to viewing the PowerPoint presentations for each module.
- PowerPoint slides for each module are posted on the SWK 325 on-line course site. Students should print the PowerPoint handouts prior to viewing the slides. Students will be permitted to use the PowerPoint handouts with notes taken during on-line presentations for reference when taking course quizzes and tests.

### **CHAT SESSIONS:**

The course includes 12 one hour chat sessions, on-line opportunities for discussion of course material. A chat session is included with each course module and one following the mid-course test. Participation in at least 10 of the twelve chat sessions is required. Participation is defined to mean meaningful contribution to the on-line discussion. Two points will be deducted from a student's course average for each chat missed below the 10 chat participation requirement. Participants in all 12 chat sessions will receive a 4 point bonus added to their course total.

Chats will be open from 12:00-1:00 and from 4:00-5:00pm on days when chats are scheduled. If sufficient need exists, chat hours may be adjusted at the beginning of the course to accommodate student schedules.

### **TESTS AND QUIZZES:**

Quizzes and tests in this course are timed and open book. Students may refer to anything but another person for help with answers. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that students review and/or summarize their notes prior to taking quizzes and tests. Time limits may not be adequate for searching one's notes for correct answers.

Four modules include self-quizzes. These are untimed, practice quizzes which do not count toward the course grade. They may be re-taken as often as desired.

There will be two quizzes, one on **June 9** and one on **June 27** evaluating understanding of course material. Student scores on the second quiz may be modified as a result of a class activity simulating income maintenance policy issues. These quizzes will be available for a 24 hour period but once a quiz is opened, the quiz must be completed within one hour. Each quiz yields 5% of the student's course grade.

There will be two tests, a mid-semester test on **June 19** and a final examination on **July 9**. The tests will be available for a 24 hour period but once a test is opened, the test must be completed within two hours. Each test yields 20% of the student's course grade.

There are no make-up quizzes or tests. If you miss a quiz due to circumstances beyond your control, the weight of that quiz will be shifted to the next test. If you miss the mid-course test, your final test will be weighed as 40% of your course grade.

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **Policy analysis questions:**

During the course, responses will be required to six policy analysis questions. These exercises are intended to provide practice and further discussion of concepts presented in class. Responses are limited to one typewritten page in length and must be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments using the WebCt assignment tool. Since each exercise will be discussed in the chat session following the assignment's due date, no late policy analysis questions will be accepted.

#### **Brief assignments:**

The course requires five brief assignments, typically responses to readings or personal reactions to material included in the course. These assignments should be ½ page or less in length (about 100 words) and should be typed directly into the submission text box provided in the WebCt assignment tool. Pay attention to submission deadlines. No late brief assignments will be accepted.

#### **Policy position statement:**

The major paper for the course is a five page **policy position statement** presenting your position on a policy issue of current concern. This assignment must be typed, double-spaced and must include, as appropriate, in-text and bibliographic citations conforming to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2001). The fifth page must provide a list following the APA format of all works, including web pages, consulted. If unfamiliar with the APA format, see the library citation resource page, <http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/smithlibrary/library1/citing.htm>, and/or consult a librarian or Eastern's Student Success Center for assistance.

A policy position paper is a concise statement in support of a policy alternative in a situation where multiple alternatives are under debate. Typically such statements begin with **Background**, discussion of conditions leading to the policy debate and its importance. NASW calls the second part an **Issue Statement**, specifying the issue to be addressed and describing the policy alternatives under consideration. The third section is the **Policy Statement**, discussion of the policy alternative supported by the author and evidence in support of his/her position. For examples of policy statements published by NASW see National Association of Social Workers. (2003). *Social Work Speaks*. Washington, DC: NASW Press, on library use reserve in our library. A 2006 issue of this volume has been published but it is not yet available in our library. Unfortunately

few NASW policy statements are available on-line.

The policy position paper assignment will be discussed further in Module 4 of the course. It is due no later than **July 3**.

### **GRADING:**

The Policy position paper will be graded as follows:

- A -** Exceeds the basic expectations for the assignment by demonstrating superior research and presenting more information and/or deeper thought and insight into the topic than a "B" paper. Flawlessly written.
- B -** Good coverage of the paper topic showing good use of reference material and providing clear and convincing support for the author's policy position. Well written with correct spelling, complete sentences, well-developed paragraphs, and a logical sequencing of ideas throughout the paper.
- C -** Satisfactory content showing basic understanding of the paper topic. Adequately written with minimal spelling and grammatical errors.
- D -** Weak content reflecting lack of effort including inadequate research and/or understanding of the paper topic. Written expression and/or poor spelling and grammar make the paper difficult to read and impede understanding of the author's ideas.
- F -** Unsatisfactory.

### **Final grade:**

Two tests @ 20 each	= 40 %
Six policy analysis exercise @ 5 each	= 30 %
Five brief assignments @ 2 each	= 10%
Two quizzes @ 5 each	= 10 %
Policy position paper	= 10%
Chat session participation – loss of two points from course grade per chat below the ten chat participation requirement. Participants in all 12 chat sessions will receive a four point bonus added to their course total.	

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

- As this is an on-line course, it is expected that all work submitted (written work, quizzes, and tests) will be that of the student.
- Plagiarism or cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment, a possible F for the course, and possible additional academic discipline by the university.

### **INSTRUCTOR:**

My office is in Webb Hall, office #430. My phone number during the day is 860-465-4621. If I am not in the office, send me an e-mail message ([nilsson@easternct.edu](mailto:nilsson@easternct.edu)) or leave a message on my voice mail and I will respond as soon as possible.

I recommend use of e-mail for personal communication. I will check and respond to my e-mail daily during the course except weekends and July 4. If voice contact is desired, leave me a voice or e-mail message with your phone number and available times.

**Special accommodations:**

If you have any special learning needs which may affect your performance in this class, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me so that mutually agreeable accommodations may be arranged. For students with disabilities, inclusion of the following notice is prescribed by Eastern's Office of AccessAbility Services:

*If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-0189. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of AccessAbility Services as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.*

**CLASS SCHEDULE:****Module 1 – Course introduction and overview: Family finds no room in Connecticut**

1. Download and review course objectives and syllabus
2. View video introduction to the course
3. Download and review 'Family finds no room' objectives and vocabulary
4. Download and read 'Family finds no room' article
5. Download PowerPoint (Ppt) handout and view presentation
6. **Deadline June 1- Brief assignment:** What did you learn from this module. Maximum 100 words. Responses to brief assignments must be typed into the WebCT assignment tool's submission text box. The assignment will close at 12:01 AM June 2.

**Chat #1 - June 2:** Discussion of course and 'Family finds no room.' Chat open 12:00-1:00 and 4:00-5:00 pm

**Module 2 - Foundations for Policy Analysis: Questions to be asked and answered.**

1. Download and review Module 2 objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Download Ppt handout and view presentation
4. Complete self-quiz on approaches to the study of social policy
5. Read: Fuller, Richard C. and Meyers, Richard R. (1941). The natural history of a social problem. *American Sociological Review*, 6(3), 320-329.
6. **Deadline June 3 – Policy Analysis Question (PAQ) #1:** Policy analysis approach taken by 'Natural history of a social problem' article. PAQ responses must be submitted as Microsoft Word attachments using the WebCT assignment tool. Maximum length, one double spaced page. The assignment will close at 12:01 June 4.

**Chat #2 - June 4:** Discussion of approaches to the study of social policy. A model answer to PAQ # 1 will be posted. Chat open 12-1:00 and 4-5:00 pm.

**Module 3 – Historical development of social policy: Competing values and views of social problems**

1. Download and review Module 3 objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Read "History of Poor People" @ <http://www.boisestate.edu/socwork/dhuff/history/central/core.htm>
4. Download Ppt handout and view 'History part I' Ppt
5. Complete the IdeaLog Political orientation assessment tutorial and self-test (approximately 30 minutes).

<http://66.241.213.91/idealog.asp?ClassID=>

6. Download and review the political perspectives handout
7. View 'History part II' PPT
8. Complete the self quiz on the factory model
9. **Deadline June 6 – PAQ # 2:** Political perspectives on a social problem. One page maximum. Submit as a MS Word attachment using the WebCt assignment tool. Deadline: 12:01 am June 8.

**Chat #3 - June 8:** Conservative, liberal, and radical perspectives. Model answers to PAQ # 2 will be posted. Chat open 12-1:00 and 4-5:00 pm.

**June 9 – First quiz:** The quiz will be available from 12:01am June 9 until 12:01am June 10. The quiz is open book. You may use anything but another person for assistance. Before opening the quiz, study and/or organize your notes. Once you open the quiz, you will have one hour to complete the answers.

#### **Module 4A - The politics of social welfare policy: Models of governmental action**

1. Download and review Module 4 objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Read: Peele, G. (2005). Electoral politics, ideology and American social policy. *Social Policy & Administration*, 39(2), 150-165.
4. Download handout and view 'Politics of social policy' PPT
5. Complete self quiz on models of political decision making
6. **Deadline June 10 – PAQ #3:** Models of political decision making and 'Natural history' article. Assignment will close 12:01 am June 11.

**Chat #4 - June 11:** Models of political decision making. A model answer to PAQ #3 will be posted.

#### **Module 4B - Electoral politics and the legislative process: How a bill becomes a law**

1. Download and review 'How a bill becomes law' handout
2. View 'How a bill becomes law' PPT

#### **Module 4C – Policy practice: Influencing legislative decision making**

1. View Influencing State Policy video excerpts:
  - a. Influencing policy (7 min.)
  - b. Legislative advocacy (20 min.)
2. Download handout and view 'Advocacy statement' PPT
3. **Deadline June 14 – Brief assignment:** 1) Identify your state legislators 2) Submit a brief description of your policy position paper topic.

**Chat #5 - June 15:** Legislative advocacy and policy position statements

#### **Module 5 – The courts and social policy: The role of litigation in shaping social policy**

1. Download and review module 5 objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Read: Johnson, F. M., Jr. (1975). Court decisions and the social services. *Social Work*, 20(5), 343-347.
4. Download handout and view 'Courts and social policy' PPT
5. View Brown v. Board of Education video
6. Download and complete 'Do we still need affirmative action' self-guided activity

**Chat #6 - June 18:** Do we still need affirmative action? Review for mid-course test

**June 19 – Mid-course test:** The test will be available from 12:01am June 19 until 12:01am June 20. The test is open book. You may use anything but another person for assistance. Before opening the test, study and/or organize your notes. Once you open the test, you will have two hours to complete the answers.

**Chat #7 - June 20:** Discussion of mid-course test; progress of course so far

**Module 6 - Human service delivery systems: The roles of the public and private sectors**

1. Download and review module 6 learning objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Read: Phillips-Fein. (2004). Texas, Inc. *The Nation*, 278 (1), 18-23.
4. Read: Maximus articles; privatization in Connecticut
5. Download and review 'agency types' handout
6. Download handout and view delivery systems PPt
7. Complete self quiz on delivery systems

**Chat #8 – June 23:** Delivery systems

**Module 7A - Economic analysis of social welfare policy: Basic concepts**

1. Download and review module 7 learning objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Download and review 'Invisible hand' handout
4. Download handout and view the economics PPt
5. View 'Economics #1 – The supply and demand curve @ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWVG0FAfgmA> , a bit crazy but useful Youtube video

**Module 7B – Economic analysis of social policies:**

- The impact of rent control
  - The impact of raising the minimum wage
  - Universal medical insurance
1. Download the applied economics handout and view the housing market PPt
  2. Read the following website articles:
    - Economic Policy Institute. (2008). Minimum wage issue guide: facts at a glance. [http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/issueguides\\_minwage\\_minwagefacts](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/issueguides_minwage_minwagefacts)
    - Fox, L. (2007). Minimum wage increasingly lags poverty line. *Economic Snapshots*. [http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures\\_snapshots\\_20070131](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_20070131)
    - Chapman, J. (2006). If you work, then you shouldn't be poor. *Economic Snapshots*. [http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures\\_snapshots\\_20060322](http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_20060322)
    - Sherk, J. (2007). Raising the minimum wage will not reduce poverty. *Backgrounder*, 1994, 1-3. [http://www.heritage.org/research/labor/upload/bg\\_1994.pdf](http://www.heritage.org/research/labor/upload/bg_1994.pdf)
  3. View the minimum wage PPt
  4. View the economics of medical care PPt
  5. **Deadline June 25 – PAQ # 4:** Impact of prescription drug insurance

**Chat #9 – June 26:** Economic analysis of social policy. Answers to PAQ #4 will be posted

**June 27 – Second quiz:** The quiz will be available from 12:01am June 27 until 12:01am June 29. The quiz is open book. You may use anything but another person for assistance. Before opening the quiz, study and/or organize your notes. Once you open the quiz, you will have one hour to complete the answers.

**Module 8 - Poverty: problems, programs, and policy issues**

1. Download and review module learning objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to the module
3. Download handout and view poverty PPT
4. Download and review the 'Who should get what from whom' activity
5. **Deadline June 29 – PAQ #5:** Your response to who should get what from whom

**Chat #10 – June 30:** Who should get what from whom? Decisions made during this on-line discussion may be used to modify scores on the second quiz

**Module 9: Family policy – International comparisons**

1. Download and review module learning objectives and vocabulary
2. View video introduction to modules 9, 10, and 11
3. Read at least pages 69-76 of Kamerman, S. B. and Kahn, A. J. (2001). Child and family policies in the United States at the opening of the twenty-first century. *Social Policy & Administration* 35 (1), 69-84.
4. **Deadline July 1 – Brief assignment:** How do child and family policies in the United States compare with those of other industrialized nations?

**Module 10: Health care policy – The United States and Canada**

1. Download and review module learning objectives and vocabulary
2. Read at least pages 55-65 of American College of Physicians. (2008). Achieving a high-performance health care system with universal access: what the United States can learn from other countries. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 148, 55-75.
3. **Deadline July 2 – Brief assignment:** What conclusion do you draw about the health care system in the United States from the article "Achieving a High-Performance Health Care System..."?
4. View the video *Borderline Medicine*

**Chat # 11 – July 3:** Fixing health care in the United States

**July 3 – Deadline for the policy position paper.** Submit as a MS Word attachment using the WebCT assignment tool.

**Module 11: Social policy and an aging population**

1. Download and review module learning objectives and vocabulary
2. Download handout and view old age PPT
3. View the video *Can't Afford to Grow Old*
4. **Deadline July 7 – Brief assignment:** What social policies would you like strengthened or changed to protect you in your old age?

**Chat #12 – July 8:** The future of aging; review for the end of course test

**July 9 – End of course test:** The test will be available from 12:01am July 9 until 12:01am July 10. The test is open book. You may use anything but another person for assistance. Before opening the test, study and/or organize your notes. Once you open the test, you will have two hours to complete the answers.

**RECOMMENDED READING AND WEB RESOURCES****United States history from a conflict perspective:**

Zinn, Howard. (1980). *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper & Row.

**Histories of social welfare policy in the United States:**

Trattner, Walter I. (1989). *From Poor Law to Welfare State*. New York: Free Press

Piven, Francis Fox and Richard A. Cloward. (1993). *Regulating the Poor*. New York: Vintage Books.

Katz, Michael B. (1996). *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*. New York: Basic Books.

**The classic description of blaming the victim:**

Ryan, William. (1976). *Blaming the Victim*. New York: Vintage Books.

**A controversial assessment of how America is losing the war on poverty**

Murray, Charles. (1984). *Losing Ground*. New York: Basic Books

**Two novel-like histories of policy development and implementation:**

Shilts, Randy. (1987). *And The Band Played On*. New York: St Martin's Press. (The story of our nation's response to AIDS.)

Lukas, J. Anthony. (1986). *Common Ground*. New York: Vintage Books. (A gripping story of court ordered desegregation of the Boston Public Schools.

**An insightful text on policy practice and advocacy:**

Gil, David G. (1998). *Confronting Injustice and Oppression*. New York: Columbia University Press.

**Many good articles on the future of social policy:**

Reisch, Michael and Gambrell, Eileen. (1997). *Social Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

**Policy studies and data:**

The final folder on the course WebCT Vista site contains links to the following Adobe Acrobat documents:

From Cradle to Prison, a Children's Defense Fund report on the impact of poverty and race in the lives of children

A PowerPoint presentation on the federal budget process and its implications for social welfare produced by the Coalition for Human Needs

Occupation Earnings by Sex, the full Bureau of Labor Statistics data set comparing male and female earnings by occupation

Pulling Apart USA 2008, a state by state analysis of the growing gap between rich and poor by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Pulling Apart in Connecticut 2008, a PowerPoint presentation on the growing gap between rich and poor in Connecticut and its impact on families and children by Connecticut Voices for Children

Spending on Children, a 2008 PowerPoint presentation on children in the federal budget by First Focus

Children in the Federal budget, the complete study by First Focus used for the PowerPoint presentation above.

**A social work search engine:**

Journal articles and other Resources For Social Workers – <http://www.nyu.edu/socialwork/ip/>

Two excellent Penn State University sites:

[www.povertyinamerica.psu.edu](http://www.povertyinamerica.psu.edu) – poverty and welfare policy articles

[www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu](http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu) – provides a living wage calculator for your home town with comparisons to the minimum wage, poverty line, and typical wages earned in your community

**Extensive lists of links to social policy sites:**

Influencing State Policy – [www.statepolicy.org](http://www.statepolicy.org)

Almanac of Policy Issues – [www.policyalmanac.org](http://www.policyalmanac.org)

Social Policy Action Network – [www.span-online.org](http://www.span-online.org) (best for child welfare links)

**Some of many sites offering policy studies:**

Center on Budget and Priorities – [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org) - economic analysis of current policies

American Public Human Services Association – [www.aphsa.org](http://www.aphsa.org) - analysis of public social policy issues

Welfare Information Network – [www.welfareinfo.org](http://www.welfareinfo.org) - information, policy analysis and numerous links relevant to welfare reform

The Urban Institute – [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org) - nonpartisan economic and social policy research