

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**

SWRK 395: SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY & ISSUES (CRN: 26717)

Instructor:	R. Dale Smith, LCSW, PhD	Term:	Spring, 2012
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Office Hours:	Tuesday: 11:00 - 11:30. Thursday: 11:00 - 12:00.		

Required Textbooks:

Karger, H.J., & Stoesz, D. (2010). American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

American Psychological Association. (2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, D. C: Author.

Every day, with the exception of Fall Break, read a daily newspaper of your choice. Suggestions include the New York Times or Washington Post for national and international news coverage, and the Louisville Courier-Journal or Lexington Herald Leader for state and local news coverage. By the way, Kroger's now carries copies of the New York Times.

Course Description:

Prerequisite: SWRK 330 (Human Behavior in the Social Environment I). An understanding of the historical perspectives of social welfare policies as they impact current policy issues is the focus of the course. This is combined with an examination of the processes of policy formulation. Models of policy analysis assist students in identifying the impact of policy on citizens representing a diversity of backgrounds.

Educational Approach:

This class will emphasize social policy formulation and analysis. Students are urged to routinely follow contemporary issues in social welfare policy through the supplemental resources listed in this syllabus and in the "Commentary, Articles,

Websites, etc.” Forum found on the Blackboard (Bb) menu under the “Discussions” link.

Students should understand social policy as an area of social work practice. Social policy is the mechanism used to determine how society’s resources are distributed. John Gardner states in Recovery of Confidence that "An important thing to understand about any institution or social system, is that it does not move unless it's pushed." It is expected that the content and experiences provided in this course will help students become agents of social change who will be able to "push" more effectively.

Many members of the current United States Congress have expressed interest in addressing issues of current governmental policy. Members of Congress have offered proposals to significantly change Social Security Insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, student loans, tax policy, etc. Closer to home, the 2012 Kentucky General Assembly meets for 90 days during January, February and March. For a review of proposed legislation during the 2012 General Assembly, check out the supplemental resources listed below for an overview of key issues and a listing of all members of the General Assembly. The 2012 political races are also heating up. On a federal level, one third of United States Senate seats and every House of Representatives seat will be up for election in November. Of course there will also be an election for President. One can anticipate social welfare policy to be the subject of much national, state, and local interest during the semester.

Supplemental Resources: Additional Policy Related Books

DiNitto, D., & Cummins, L. (2007). Social welfare: Politics and public policy (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Karger, H. J., & Midgley, J. (1994). Controversial issues in social policy. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

McInnis-Dittrich, K. (1994). Integrating social welfare policy & social work practice. CA: Brooks/Cole.

Popple, P., & Leighninger, L. (2001). The policy-based profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Prigmore, C.S., & Atherton, C.R. (1979). Social welfare policy: Analysis and formulation. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.

Supplemental Resources: Radio, Television, and the Print Media.

All Things Considered. National Public Radio (NPR). Locally, this show is broadcast Monday--Friday through WKYU, on Channel 88.9 FM from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M. CST.

All Things Considered: Morning Edition. National Public Radio (NPR). Locally, this show is broadcast Monday—Friday through WKYU, on Channel 88.9 FM from 6:00 to 9:00 A.M. CST.

The Louisville Courier-Journal. This newspaper is published daily and sold throughout the state of Kentucky. The Forum section in the Sunday edition is a particularly good source for policy related information.

The Lexington Herald Leader. This newspaper is published daily and sold throughout the state of Kentucky. The editorial section in the Sunday edition is a particularly good source for policy related information.

The PBS News Hour. Public Broadcasting System (PBS). Locally, this show is broadcast Monday--Friday through the Kentucky Educational Television network (KET), on Insight Channel 26 from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M. CST.

CNN News. Evening news shows (e.g., Anderson Cooper). Locally broadcast on Insight Channel 67.

Fox News. Evening news shows (e.g., Sean Hannity). Locally broadcast on Insight Channel 54.

MSNBC. Evening news shows (e.g., Rachel Maddow). Locally broadcast on Insight Channel 36.

Supplemental Resources: Electronic Media and Internet Sites.

- American Association of Retired Persons, a membership organization that advocates for older adults' issues: <http://www.aarp.org>
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org/>
- The United States Department for Health & Human Services: <http://www.dhhs.gov/>
- FirstGov, an official U.S. Government website: <http://www.firstgov.gov/>

- State of Kentucky homepage: <http://www.ky.gov>
- Kentucky Board of Social Work: <http://bsw.ky.gov>
- Kentucky Virtual Library: <http://www.kyvl.org/>
- Legislative Research Commission (Kentucky): <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/>
- Library of Congress, the national archives: <http://www.loc.gov/>
- National Association of Social Workers, the professional social work organization with interest in social welfare policy issues: <http://naswdc.org>
- National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, an issue-focused organization devoted to maintaining the basic structure of Social Security: <http://www.ncpssm.org/>
- Electronic Policy Network, a link to numerous policy analysis sites: <http://www.epn.org>
- Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov/>. Also see <http://www.ssa.gov/women> for Social Security issues of relevance to women.
- Southern Poverty Law Center: www.splcenter.org
- The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- The United Nations: <http://www.un.org/>
- The Washington Post: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- <http://www.abacon.com/dinitto> has links to Thomas (Library of Congress), Congressional Quarterly, Congressional Budget Office and others.
- Various web sites are suggested in each chapter of the text.

Student Disability Services:

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Course Objectives

Knowledge

- Students will explore and understand bias and how this effects examination of policy.
- Students will learn the historical framework of social work policy in the United States.
- Students will acquire knowledge of the major past and present United States social welfare policies.
- Students will be acquainted with the interconnectivity between state, national, and international policy.
- Students will acquire the knowledge to conduct a policy analysis.
- Students will develop an understanding of external factors impinging on policy formation.
- Students will develop an understanding of unintended consequences of social policy.
- Students will be acquainted with the connection of policy analysis, social justice, and advocacy to the Social Work code of ethics.
- Students will develop an understanding of the interconnectivity between policy, practice, and research.
- Students will acquire the knowledge to understand latent and manifest forms of oppression (the “isms”) toward society’s most vulnerable populations (e.g. older persons, immigrants/refugees, gays and lesbians, the poor).
- Students will develop an understanding of current policies targeted towards specific stages of the life span.
- Students will be acquainted with the gaps in public policy for specific segments of vulnerable populations (e.g. older persons, immigrants/refugees, gays and lesbians, the poor).

Skills

- Students will be able to understand the effect of history on policy formation.
- Students will be able to analyze policy independently.
- Students will have the knowledge to use policy analysis to propose ideas of reform for the policy under study.
- Students will be able to communicate both sides of controversial issues.
- Students will be able to synthesize class knowledge with current United States and world policies.

- Students will be able to understand and describe the interconnectivity between global concerns and United States policy.
- Students will demonstrate cultural sensitivity toward our society's most vulnerable people (e.g. older persons, immigrants/refugees, gays and lesbians, the poor).
- Students will be able to articulate policy changes for specific segments of vulnerable populations (e.g. older persons, immigrants/refugees, gays and lesbians, the poor).

Description of Course Assignments:

Reading Assignments

Readings are assigned from the textbook and other specific sources. Students are expected to carefully read the assignments and integrate the material through Discussion Board Questions on Bb.

Homework/Discussion Board Questions (100 points)

Discussion Board Questions (DBQs) will be the main forum for class interaction. One homework assignment and 9 discussion board questions (DBQs) are assigned for the semester. The homework assignment will be posted on Bb and submitted through the Assignment Drop-Box. Regarding discussion board questions, students will first respond to each of the discussion questions by posting a short essay (Part A), and then respond to at least two others' postings (Part B). Additional information about DBQs is provided on the Bb General Discussion Board.

Each DBQ will be assessed by the instructor according to the following criteria: (1) evidence of reading and comprehension of reading assignments, **including proper APA citations**; (2) originality of the postings; (3) ability to demonstrate critical thinking skills; (4) ability to assess others' essays and **add** to their essays; and (5) on time submission. The discussion board essays are typically due by 11:00 p.m. (CST) on Thursdays in each specific week. The two response posts are typically due by 11:00 p.m. on Sundays in each specific week.

Failure to meet the deadline will result in "0" points for the assignment.

Due to the high enrollment in this course, students are divided into two groups.

Find your group first and make your postings in the respective group.

EXAMS (400 points)

Four online exams are administered on Bb through the DELO office. Exams consist of fifty questions worth two points each, roughly seventy-five percent multiple choice and twenty-five percent true/false. Students have an hour to complete each exam at the appropriate testing site. Additional information about testing sites is provided on Bb in the General Discussion Board.

Evaluation and Grading:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Maximum Point Value</u>
Homework/Discussion Board Questions	100 points
Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Exam 4	100 points
TOTAL POINTS:	500 Points

Grading Scale: At the end of the term, total points for the semester will be added together and “plugged in” to the grade distribution according to the following scale.

500 - 450	A
449 - 400	B
399 - 350	C
349 - 300	D
299 or less	F

**Social Welfare Policy and Issues: SWRK 395
Spring 2012 Schedule**

<u>Week #</u>	<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Jan. 23	Karger & Stoesz textbook, Chapters 1& 2 (31 pages) Introduction to Social Welfare Policy Framework for Policy Analysis To get a good feel for Social Welfare Policy, watch President Obama's "State of the Union" speech on Tuesday, January 24th, at 8:00 pm.
2	Jan. 30	Karger & Stoesz. Chapter 3 (16 pages) Religion and Social Welfare Policy HW (DBQ) #1 is due February 2, at 11:00 pm CST.
3	Feb. 6	Karger & Stoesz. Chapter 4 (40 pages) Discrimination in American Society DBQ (HW) #2 is due February 9, at 11:00 pm CST.
4	Feb. 13	Karger & Stoesz. Chapter 5 (28 pages) Poverty in America DBQ #3 is due February 16, at 11:00 pm CST.
5	Feb. 20	EXAM #1. (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
6	Feb. 27	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 6 & 7 (53 pages) The Voluntary Sector. Privatization and Human Services Corporations DBQ #4 is due March 1, at 11:00 pm CST.

7	Mar. 5	Spring Break! Social Work Day at the Capital on March 7th! Frankfort, KY.
8	Mar. 12	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 8 & 9 (38 pages) The Making of Governmental Policy. Tax Policy & Income Distribution. DBQ #5 is due March 15, at 11:00 pm CST.
9	Mar 19	Exam #2 (Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9)
10	Mar 26	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 10 & 11 (35 pages) Social Insurance Programs. Public Assistance Programs. DBQ #6 is due March 29, at 11:00 pm CST.
11	Apr 2	Karger & Stoesz. Chapter 12 (30 pages) The American Health Care System. DBQ #7 is due April 5, at 11:00 pm CST.
12	Apr 9	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 13 & 14 (34 pages) Mental Health & Substance Abuse Policy. Criminal Justice. DBQ #8 is due April 12, at 11:00 pm CST. KASWE Conference at the University of Kentucky April 12-13.
13	Apr 16	Exam #3 (Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)
14	Apr 23	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 15 & 16 (48 pages) Child Welfare Policy, Housing Policies.

DBQ #9 is due April 26, at 11:00 pm CST

15	Apr 30	Karger & Stoesz. Chapters 17 & 18 (42 pages) The Politics of Food Policy and Rural Life. The American Welfare State in International Perspective.
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DBQ #10 is due May 3, at 11:00 pm CST.

16	May 7	FINALS WEEK.
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EXAM #4 (Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18).