

The University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work

Social Welfare Programs, Policies, and Issues

<b>Course Number:</b>	323K	<b>Instructor:</b>	Debbie Webb, Ph.D., LCSW, LPC, LCDC
<b>Semester:</b>	Spring 2017	<b>Contact Information:</b>	Adjunct Office, SSW, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor debbiewebb@aol.com 512-799-9358 (cell)
<b>Unique Number:</b>	61795	<b>Office Hours:</b>	TTh 3:30PM – 4:30PM; & by appt.
<b>Course Flags</b>	Writing <sup>a</sup> , Independent Inquiry <sup>b</sup>		
<b>Meeting Place:</b>	SSW 2.130		
<b>Meeting Times:</b>	TTH 2PM–3:30PM		

### Independent Inquiry

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

### Writing

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

### • Course Description

This course is the second course in the social policy curriculum area. Prerequisites include Government 310L and 312L (or their equivalents), an introductory economics course, and admission to the social work major. This course is designed to provide students with the ability to analyze contemporary social welfare policy issues and programs and to understand the relationship between social policy and social work practice. The course focuses on the historical, political, economic, and other social conditions that influence policy development in the United States. Specific policy areas that are discussed are those in which social workers play major roles: income maintenance (with a focus on social insurance and public assistance), health, mental health, child welfare, and aging. Policy issues and programs are addressed as they affect majority groups as well as populations at risk (e.g., children, people of color, people with disabilities, women, LGBTs) with a particular emphasis on social and economic justice. Students learn to

use policy analysis tools in order to understand how policy influences practice and planning decisions and how social workers can influence social welfare policy.

### • Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand significant historical events and persons that influenced the field of social work and social welfare policy.
2. Analyze the connections between the history and contemporary structures of social policy.
3. Understand the impact of economics, politics, and social values on the identification of social problems and policy formation in the United States and the ways that issues of diversity (such as culture, class, gender, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, and age) have been addressed.
4. Apply conceptual frameworks for analyzing the development of social welfare policy.
5. Define key concepts in social welfare policy (e.g., universal, residual, public assistance, social insurance, cash, in-kind).
6. Understand the major policies that form the foundation of social welfare policy in the U.S.
7. Apply relevant research frameworks for evaluating the effects of social welfare policy on national, state, and local populations and economically vulnerable subgroups.
8. Analyze the impact of social welfare policy in terms of social and economic justice and the promotion of social work values.
9. Discuss trends in comparative international social welfare policy.
10. Understand roles social workers play in the formation of social policy and the effects of social policies on social work practice.
11. Exercise policy advocacy skills at the legislative and organizational levels.

### III. Teaching Methods

A variety of teaching methods will be used including interactive lectures (students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments during the lectures), readings, guest speakers, videos, class exercises, written assignments, student presentations, peer feedback from class members, interviews with people interested in and knowledgeable about policy issues, and observation of meetings on policy-related issues.

### IV. Required Reading

- DiNitto, D. M., & Johnson, D. H. (2012). *Essentials of social welfare: Politics and public policy*. Boston: Pearson.
- Gerzon, Mark (2016). *The Reunited States of America: How We Can Bridge the Partisan Divide*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Rocha, C. J. (2007). *Essentials of social work policy practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

## V. Policies

### A. Policies Specific to This Course

- 1. Professional conduct:** Your attendance, attention, and participation are expected for all class sessions. Daily attendance (roll) will be taken, and the policy on pop quizzes will be strictly applied. Class participation includes reading all assigned materials prior to the class session and actively engaging in class discussions and exercises. Lively class discussion is encouraged. Respectful communication is necessary to the learning environment, especially when a class such as this one focuses on “hot” political topics on a regular basis. Please turn off cell phone ringers and refrain from texting and other non-class activities such as web-surfing, checking your un-related emails, etc. Students are also expected to observe professional codes of conduct with regard to confidentiality, dress, language, and other matters and exercise good judgment while interacting with agencies, organizations, and other entities on assignments for this course. If there is a challenging problem with which you need assistance, ask for help and attend office hours right away. If there is a miscommunication or potential misunderstanding about an assignment or a comment made in class by you, the professor, or by a student peer, seek clarification immediately and strive to “get into a solution” instead of “staying as a part of the problem.” Excellent, clear, professional communication is always the goal.
- 2. Submitting assignments:** (a) All papers should be word-processed and in 12-point font, with double-spacing, and with reasonable margins. (b) Submit all assignments in hard copy (do **not** submit them electronically unless asked to do so). (c) Assignment due dates are noted in the course calendar. **All** assignments are due at the start of the class period. Assignments submitted after the start of class will be considered late for that day unless **prior** arrangements have been made with the instructor. Except in the case of serious illness or emergency, **five points** will be deducted for each day an assignment is late (this includes weekend days). (d) The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) is the style manual to be used unless another referencing style is more appropriate for the assignment. (e) Appropriate referencing of citations (authors, titles, page numbers, etc.) is required. This includes giving due credit to others when indirect quotes (paraphrasing) and direct (verbatim) quotes are used. Short direct quotes (less than 40 words) must be placed in quotation marks. Long direct quotes (40 or more words) must be indented. Paraphrasing requires more than changing a word or two in a sentence. Failure to give due credit to others will result in a **“0” for the assignment and/or an “F” for the course. Plagiarism is a form of scholastic dishonesty and will be addressed as such (see item 3 below). If you do not know how to cite appropriately, please learn before you submit any assignments.**
- 3. Scholastic Dishonesty:** Scholastic dishonesty may result in a report to the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs in the School of Social Work, the Dean of the School of Social Work, and/or Student Judicial Services. Students may receive an “F” for the course and other sanctions in accordance with University policies, including dismissal from the University. Also see item 5 on scholastic dishonesty under University Policies below.

For help please see: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

- 4. Course modifications:** Should any modifications or changes need to be made to the course (e.g., calendar, assignments), students will be notified in class and/or by e-mail. Students should check their e-mail frequently, and students who are absent from class

should check on announcements made in class during their absence.

5. **Use of CANVAS:** The course CANVAS site will be used for various purposes (posting the syllabus and some documents, etc.). Some course communication will also be done via e-mail. Also see item 7 on e-mail under University Policies below.
6. **Office Hours:** Required: Make at least one office hour visit with Dr. Webb within the first three weeks of classes.
7. **Librarian Assistance:** Required: Go to the UT Austin Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL) in person and ask the Librarian specifically assigned to assist social work students and professors to orient you to research resources such as how to search for recent peer reviewed research articles related to your topic area, and how to use noodlebib utilizing APA format for references.
8. **Writing Center:** Strongly Recommended: Go the UT Austin Writing Center at least twice for assistance and feedback on your DRAFT of Policy Brief Part 1, and again on your DRAFT of Policy Brief Part 2, **BEFORE** you turn in the related assignment.

## B. University Policies

- 1) **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
- 2) **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.
- 3) **DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed

accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. More information may be found at <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

- 4) **UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.
- 5) **POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>).
- 6) **POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by

the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

- 7) **USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.
  
- 8) **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
  
- 9) **CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.
  
- 10) **USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.
  
- 11) **CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

(FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

- 12) **TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.
- 13) **SAFETY.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.
- 14) **BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>.
- 15) **EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.

Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

### 19) GRADING SCALE

#### 94.0 and Above A

90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

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## VI. Course Assignments and Student Evaluation

Student achievement in meeting course objectives will be based on (a) pop quizzes and (b) a policy analysis and action project, plus participation informed by readings, and attendance.

### A. Pop Quizzes

It is important to keep up with the reading assignments in this class and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. To facilitate this taking place on a consistent basis, five "pop" quizzes will be given during the semester (i.e., prior notice of dates will not be given). The lowest grade will be dropped. **The four highest grades will each count as 5% of your final grade (20% total).** Each quiz will contain 10 to 20 questions. Each quiz will cover the readings for that class day and the previous class day's work as applicable (readings, lectures, discussion, guest speaker). Questions will be multiple choice, true or false, matching, fill-in-the blank, &/or short answer items. Since one quiz grade will be dropped, **NO** make-up quizzes will be given unless warranted by a documented



serious illness or emergency that results in a student missing more than one quiz.

## B. Policy Analysis and Action Project

The policy analysis and action project is intended to help students learn more about the legislative process, provide each student an opportunity to select and thoroughly analyze an important contemporary legislative issue of particular interest to her or him, select a related bill, and to develop skills in policy practice, including analysis, writing, presentation, and advocacy. Since written and oral communication is critical for social work practice, the project is composed of (1) a policy brief, (2) either a newspaper editorial or letter to a legislator, (3) written and oral legislative testimony, (4) critiques of classmates' testimony. The assignment is also intended to address the EPAS competency and practice behaviors designated for this course and meet the course's writing and independent inquiry flags. The project components will be graded together and count as 60% of the final grade (see Appendix B). Begin by selecting a bill introduced into the current 85<sup>th</sup> session of the Texas legislature. **The Texas Legislature Online website (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>) is a good way to search for a bill, etc., and it is imperative that you acquaint yourself with the very useful information that it contains.** The course instructor will help you get started with the process. Select a bill that addresses child welfare, health care, public assistance, mental health services, services to people with developmental disabilities, aging, or another social welfare issue of interest to you. Identify legislators, organizations, groups, and committees that have worked on the bill or issue or are currently working on the issue(s) or in the field the bill addresses. You may wish to work with groups, organizations, or committees involved in the issue. Become familiar with the bill and related proposals to modify/amend the bill or replace it with other legislation. Investigate the bill's background and legislative history. Conduct a literature review and identify scholarly references and other reports or studies that address the bill and provide **evidence** about what the effects of the bill might be. Seek the opinions or positions of those with various views on the issue and determine which groups and individuals (e.g., state legislators, professional groups, citizen advocacy groups) support, oppose, or are neutral on the issue and their rationale, including any evidence they believe supports their position. Students may work with a partner or in a small group to gather and discuss information; in fact, you are encouraged to do so as part of the learning process, but each student must independently compose her or his brief, editorial or letter, and testimony. **It may help to approach this project by thinking of yourself as a policy analyst employed by a social welfare agency (governmental or private) or a think tank, an aide working for a state legislator, or a staff member of a legislative committee.** In any case, your job is to educate others about the bill and the issue it addresses and provide reasons for supporting, not supporting, or remaining neutral on the bill.

Handouts will be provided and class sessions will address how to identify a bill; write a policy brief, editorial, and letter to a legislator; how to write and deliver testimony; and how to provide feedback to classmates. All written products should be in 12-point font. Use Arial font. **Your policy brief should be 6 to 7 tightly written pages (not including references and appendices [if any]) with 1.5 line spacing and formatted and written in a way that will engage readers. The MAXIMUM length that will be accepted for a complete policy brief will be 10 pages. Cite at least 10 scholarly research references.** In addition, you may also cite relevant newspaper articles or other credible popular media. You are encouraged to use graphs, charts, quotes, vignettes, or other devices to make the brief informative and appealing to read. Your editorial should be 700 to 750 words. Your letter should be a full one-page including appropriate salutation. Your testimony should be written in such a way that it can be delivered in three minutes. In addition to submitting your brief, editorial or letter to a legislator, and testimony in written form to the instructor, the class will be divided into groups of three or four and each member will be asked to critique the written testimony of the two other class members so that each class member can improve his or her testimony before

delivering it to the class. Provide at least one sentence that describes the strengths of your classmates' testimony and two to three that suggest how the testimony might be strengthened or improved. Provide the written critiques to your classmates and to the instructor via email. Be sure to include your name on the critique. On the last day of class, via your project folder, turn in hard copies of your critiques of others' testimonies, and their critiques of your testimony to Dr. Webb.

**If you do not submit each assignment at the start of the class on which it is due, it will be considered late. The more effort you put into your work the first time you submit it, the more meaningful or useful the feedback from Dr. Webb, will be. Revise each assignment as needed before submitting your final work. It is your responsibility to continue polishing and improving your own work, independently, until you turn it in on the last day. Dr. Webb is looking for CONTINUED PROGRESS, not simply correcting previously pointed out areas for improvement.**

### **C. Attending Meetings at the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature during 2017:**

Each student must select and attend 4 meetings (i.e., subcommittee) or sessions (House or Senate) of the Texas Legislature, for a minimum of one hour each (type of meeting and topic(s) of interest is up to the prerogative of the student), and then turn in a hard copy of a two page reflection paper about what s/he observed and learned. With previous permission from Dr. Webb, meetings may be electronically accessed online or on cable TV IF it is impossible for the student to attend the meeting in person. Other policy-related meetings may be substituted for two Texas legislative meetings, such as City Council meetings, County Commissioner meetings, School Board Meetings, etc. National meetings of Congressional Subcommittees, for example, may be utilized. Place proposed and finally attended meetings on your Policy Project PLAN which should be updated throughout the semester because it is a "living document." All reflection papers about the meetings attended are due by the last day of class and are worth 2.5 points each for a total of 10 points (10% of final grade).

#### **a. Active Participation & Attendance**

Roll will be taken each time class meets and students are expected to be in attendance, if at all possible. Likewise, as expressed earlier in this syllabus, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities in a respectful, professional manner. Please raise your hand to obtain the floor to ask questions, contribute to discussions, agree or disagree with Dr. Webb &/or other students about policy topics, etc. Active participation (5%) and attendance (5%) will make up a total of 10% of your grade for the semester. Those who seldom speak in class can expect lower participation grades. Those who have no trouble speaking in class need to be aware of the needs of others to meet this expectation, as well, and thus thoughtfully yield the floor to them, when they volunteer to speak.

### **Key Assignment Due Dates**

**Thursday, Feb. 2: Policy analysis and action project PLAN.**

**Thursday, Feb. 23: Part 1 of the policy brief: (a) title, (b) brief identification of the bill and what it is intended to do, (c) problem bill is intended to address and context/background/history of the bill (use references as appropriate), (d) description of the bill and what it intends to accomplish.**

**Thursday, Mar. 28: Revision of Part 1 PLUS submission of first draft of Part 2 of your policy brief: (a) analysis of the bill using available scholarly and other credible literature and viewpoints of representatives of at least three constituent groups, (b) recommendations for improving/modifying or replacing the bill (use references as needed), (c) a brief conclusion, (d) references cited and other resources, (e) appendices (if needed). Also write your first draft of a short Executive Summary (Abstract) to be placed at the beginning of the policy brief.**

**Thursday, Mar. 30: Hard Copy Letter to Editor (Newspaper Editorial) turned in to Dr. Webb. See Appendices D & E.**

**Thursday, Apr. 13: Draft of Testimony sent to assigned group of student peers & Dr. Webb.**

**Friday, Apr. 14 by 5PM: YOUR written critiques (feedback) given back via email to each of your student peers in your assigned group and Dr. Webb. (These will ALSO be placed in your final folder in hard copy and turned in the last day of class.)**

**Thursday, Apr. 20: Written hard copy of YOUR testimony is turned in to Dr. Webb today, plus verbally present your testimony to the whole class for feedback today, or on a following class date (depending on date assigned for you to make your presentation).**

**Thursday, May 4: LAST DAY OF CLASS: ALL Final Written Work Due (place final BRIEF and clean copies of all final assignments (Final updated PLAN; Editorial or Letter; Testimony; YOUR written critiques of other students testimony drafts; their written critiques of your testimony; clean copies of all 4 reflection papers) into the LEFT sleeve of a folder, and ALL PREVIOUS drafts which include professor comments into the RIGHT sleeve of your folder.**

**Criteria for Evaluating Policy Brief (See Appendix B: Grading Rubric)**

- 1. Completeness and thoroughness:** How fully has the topic been addressed? Has it been sufficiently researched using scholarly references and other resources (e.g., databases), interviews, and other means (e.g., webinars, meeting attendance) to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Does the paper leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered, or are important issues left unaddressed? Has the paper or other product been carefully proofread?
- 2. Organization and clarity:** Is the brief well written and logically organized? Are there appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections? Are the sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality? Have descriptive headings (and subheadings if needed) been used to improve organization? Are issues addressed in a way that someone unfamiliar with them as well as someone knowledgeable about them can understand?
- 3. Referencing:** Are there a sufficient number of appropriate references, including at least 10 scholarly references? Has referencing been done according to the American Psychological Association or other appropriate referencing style? Are the references well integrated in the text? Are short direct quotations noted in quotation marks; are longer direct quotations indented, and are page numbers or paragraph numbers for non-paginated electronic sources indicated for all direct quotations? Are indirect quotes paraphrased sufficiently?
- 4. Originality and Creativity:** Does the work demonstrate that different viewpoints have been

considered, compared, and contrasted and that the writer has a thorough understanding of the issues? Has the student used his or her analytical skills in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what others have said about this issue? Has the student suggested points that others have not addressed? Is the work prepared in a way that will gain the interest and attention of the intended audience(s)?

### Criteria for Evaluating Editorial, Letter to a Legislator, and Testimony

1. Quality of writing, including organization, grammar, and syntax
2. Extent to which major points are addressed
3. How compelling your written arguments are
4. Compelling/convincing delivery of your verbal testimony

### VIII. Course Calendar

Date	Topics	Readings (text)	Assignments Due
Tues. Jan. 17	<p>Introductions of students and instructor</p> <p>Informal “fireside chat” lecture format and “coaching style” of Dr. Webb.</p> <p>Research flag and Writing flag: “Inoculation” <u>against</u> any potential “intimidation or fear.” We’ve ALL been there! There <u>are</u> NO “stupid questions!”</p> <p>Course overview</p> <p>Why social workers study social welfare policy (Hint: “Policy affects social work practice and practice affects social welfare policy.”)</p> <p>What is social welfare policy and is it rational?</p>		Ice Breaker participation.
Thur. Jan. 19	<p>What is policy practice and how do social workers practice policy?</p> <p>What making sausage and making social policy have in common (a review of how an idea might become a bill and how a bill might become a law)</p> <p>Class exercise: Changing policy</p> <p>Selecting a bill for your policy project</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, “Introduction: Politics, Rationalism, and Social Welfare Policy,” pp. 1-11; Chapter 1, “Politics and the Policymaking Process,” pp. 12-20</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 1, “Introduction to Community-based Policy Practice”</p>	<p>Self-assess and discuss potential anxiety or comfort with public speaking.</p> <p>Self-assess and discuss level of assertiveness</p>

Tues. Jan. 24	The language of social policy  Who pays, who benefits? Them, us, or all of us? (or why tax policy and budgeting are important)	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 1, "Politics and the Policymaking Process," pp. 20-26	
Thur. Jan. 26	Does history repeat itself?: Milestones in social welfare policy	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 3, "Politics and the History of Social Welfare Policy," pp. 48-73  Begin reading for your policy analysis project	
Tues. Jan. 31	Politics and policy analysis, implementation, and evaluation  How to write a policy analysis brief	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 2, The Politics of Policy Analysis, Implementation, and Evaluation," pp. 27-47  Rocha, Chapter 2, "Essentials of the Planning Process"  Handouts on writing policy briefs  Policy analysis project reading	
Thur. Feb. 2	Panel: Careers in social welfare policy	Rocha, Chapter 3, "Essentials of Effective Interpersonal Communication and Participation"; Chapter 6, "Essentials of Interest Group Politics: Coalition Building and Task Force Development"  Policy analysis project reading	<b>TYPED policy analysis and action project PLAN (see Appendix A). Include names of those to be interviewed, &amp; meetings, dates &amp; times.</b>
Tues. Feb. 7	Why we can't agree on what poverty is, how to measure it, and whether it exists  Securing the basics: Food, shelter, education, and living wage policy	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 4, "Ending Poverty: Is It An Issue Anymore?," pp. 74-98; Chapter 9, Preventing poverty: Education and employment policy," pp. 195-219  Policy analysis project reading	
Thur. Feb. 9	Individual project consultation, interviews, hearings, meetings		

<p>Tues. Feb. 14</p>	<p>Preventing poverty: Why Social Security is a great achievement and why it isn't broke/n</p> <p>The late Patty Duke</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vy48OL79KU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vy48OL79KU</a></p> <p>and</p> <p>George Takei (Hikaru Sulu)</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJPqrVVtjNE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJPqrVVtjNE</a></p> <p>enroll in the Social Security retirement program</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 5, "Preventing Poverty: Social Insurance and Personal Responsibility," pp. 100-121</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<p>Select a legislator whom you want to meet with about your topic of interest for this class and <u>make an appointment to meet Mar. 8 (ahead of time)</u>.</p>
<p>Thur. Feb. 16</p>	<p>Social Services for older adults</p> <p>Class exercise: Saving Social Security</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 5 cont.; DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 232-237</p>	
<p>Tues. Feb. 21</p>	<p>Disability policy: Human timeline</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 6, "Disability Policy: From Public Assistance to Civil Rights," pp. 122-144</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	
<p>Thur. Feb. 23</p>	<p>Disability policy: Seeking full participation for all</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 6 cont.</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 7, "Essentials of Community-based Policy Practice"</p>	<p><b>Part 1 of policy brief</b></p>
<p>Tues. Feb. 28</p>	<p>Reproductive policy: How will it likely stay the same and how will it likely change under current administration in Texas and Nationally?</p> <p>Is feminism dead?</p> <p>How to write an editorial (letter to an editor).</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 11, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation," pp. 248-267</p> <p>Rocha, Chapter 10, "Essentials of Judicial Policy Practice"</p> <p>Handouts on writing editorials (See Appendices D &amp; E.)</p>	

		Policy analysis project reading	
Thur. Mar. 2	Gay Marriage & Social Justice: Are policy and laws likely to change again, or not, under current administration?  How to write and present testimony	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 11, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Gender and Sexual Orientation," pp. 267-274  Rocha, Chapter 9, "Monitoring the Bureaucracy and Creating Change Within Organizations"  Handout on how to write and present testimony	
Tues. Mar. 7	Meeting at the Capitol and checking out resources: <b>(Note: Instructor maintains the right to change this date.)</b>	Select a legislator whom you want to meet with about your topic of interest for this class and <u>make an appointment ahead of time</u> to meet this day! If S/he is not available, make an appt. to meet with her/his aide.  After the meeting with a legislator is over, attend a committee meeting if any are taking place.	<b>In person experience at the Texas Capitol!</b>
Thur. Mar. 9	Tales of two strategies for helping families with young children: Child support enforcement and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Is TANF likely to change or stay the same under current administration?  How other countries do it, why they do it this way, and what difference it makes  Decision making and survival on public assistance: Could you do it?	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 7, "Helping Needy Families: An End to Welfare As We Knew It," pp. 145-167  Rocha, Chapter 4, "Communicating with the Public Through the Media";  Policy analysis project reading	<b>NOTE: Spring Break NEXT WEEK! Enjoy!</b>
Tues. Mar. 21	The Importance of Collaboration in policy work.	Gerzon, Mark (2016). <i>The Reunited States of America: How We Can Bridge the Partisan Divide</i> . Parts 1 & 2.  Policy analysis project reading	

Thur. Mar. 23	The Importance of Collaboration in policy work, continued.	Gerzon, Mark (2016). <i>The Reunited States of America: How We Can Bridge the Partisan Divide</i> . Part 3.  Policy analysis project reading	
Tues. Mar. 28	Child welfare policy: Protection from abuse and neglect, foster care, adoption, disproportionality and other issues plaguing the system.  Speaker: How is the system in Texas being changed right now?	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 220-232  Policy analysis project reading	<b>Revised Part 1 of policy brief PLUS first draft of Part 2 of brief is due.</b>
Thur. Mar. 30	The current state of health policy and U.S. politics: Does the Affordable Care Act (ACA, aka Obamacare) still exist? If yes, what parts are still in place? What has recently been change?	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 8, "Financing Health Care: Can All Americans Be Insured?," pp. 168-194.  Latest legislative changes at the National level.  Rocha, Chapter 8, "Essentials of Legislative Policy Practice"  Policy analysis project reading	<b>Letter to the Editor (Newspaper Editorial) is due. (See Appendices D and E.)</b>
Tues. Apr. 4	Health care around the world: How the U.S. compares	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 8 cont.	
Thur. Apr. 6	Mental health policy: Still hoping for parity	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 237-242  Policy analysis project reading	
Tues. Apr. 11	Can policy prevent substance abuse?: A look at the war on drugs  Form groups for peer feedback on testimony: Instructor assigns date each student will present 3 minute testimony to class.	DiNitto & Johnson, Chapter 10, "Providing Social Services: Help for Children, Older Americans, and Individuals with Mental and Substance Use Disorders," pp. 242-247	



<p>Thur. Apr. 13</p>	<p>Not black or white: Race, ethnicity, and social policy</p> <p>What the semester tells us about race and ethnicity in America</p> <p>Peer critiques of testimony</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 12, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration," pp. 275-294</p> <p>Policy analysis project reading</p>	<p><b>Draft of testimony in written form (sent to peers in group via email, for peer critiques, AND copied to Dr. Webb). YOUR written critiques (feedback) given back to each peer by <u>5PM Friday, Apr. 14th via email.</u></b></p>
<p>Tues. Apr. 18</p>	<p>Is immigration critical for America's future?</p> <p>How has and will President Trump's running (election) platforms Affect Immigration Policy, if at all?</p> <p>Peer critiques of testimony</p>	<p>DiNitto &amp; Johnson, Chapter 12, "The Challenges of a Diverse Society: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration," pp. 294-304</p>	
<p>Thur. Apr. 20</p>	<p>Project testimony: 3 minutes, maximum, plus feedback.</p>		<p><b><u>DUE: Turn in written hard copy of your testimony to Dr. Webb IF you present today.</u></b></p> <p><b>Verbally Critique Peers: Strengths &amp; Opportunities for Improvement.</b></p>
<p>Tues. Apr. 25</p>	<p>Project testimony: 3 minutes, maximum, plus feedback.</p>		<p><b><u>DUE: Turn in written hard copy of your testimony to Dr. Webb IF you present today.</u></b></p> <p><b>Verbally Critique Peers: Strengths &amp; Opportunities for Improvement.</b></p>
<p>Thur. Apr. 27</p>	<p>Project testimony: 3 minutes, maximum, plus feedback.</p>		<p><b><u>DUE: Turn in written hard copy of your testimony to Dr. Webb IF you present today.</u></b></p> <p><b>Verbally Critique</b></p>

			<b>Peers: Strengths &amp; Opportunities for Improvement.</b>
Tues. May 2	Project testimony: 3 minutes, maximum, plus feedback.		<b><u>DUE: Turn in written hard copy of your testimony to Dr. Webb IF you present today.</u></b>  <b>Verbally Critique Peers: Strengths &amp; Opportunities for Improvement.</b>
Thur. May 4	<b>LAST DAY OF CLASS:</b>  Wrapping it up: A look to the future of social welfare policy  Where do you stand on social policy?  <b>Turn in <u>all</u> Final Project <u>Written Work</u></b>  <b>Fill out evaluations.</b>	DiNitto & Johnson, "Conclusion: Politics, Rationalism, and the Future of Social Welfare Policy," pp. 305-307	<b><u>All</u> final project <u>written work due</u> (brief, editorial or letter, testimony, testimony critiques you gave to peers, critiques they gave to you, &amp; 4 reflection papers). Make sure you turn in a hard copy of everything! (Note: you can turn in reflection papers ANYTIME throughout the semester, but all must be in by today!)</b>

### VIII. Course Evaluation

In addition to the official Course Instructor Survey that all students will be asked to complete at the end of the term, the instructor will request feedback from students at various points during the term. Students' input is welcome throughout the term to improve the course.

### IX. Additional References

Alinsky, S. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A practical primer for realistic radicals*. New York: Vintage Books.

Amidei, N. (2010). *So you want to make a difference* (16<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: OMB Watch.

Anderson, J. E. (2010). *Public Policymaking: An introduction* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Birkland, T. A. (2011). *Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policy making* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

- Blau, J. (2010). *The dynamics of social welfare policy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bobo, K., & Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2010). *Organizing for social change: Midwest Academy manual for activists* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: The Forum Press.
- Brown, L.C., Langenegger, J. A., Garcia, S. R., Lewis, T. A., & Biles, R. E. (2014). *Practicing Texas politics* (2013-2014 edition). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Cummins, L. K., Byers, K. V., & Pedrick, L. (2011). *Policy practice for social workers: New strategies for a new era*. Boston: Pearson.
- Day, P. (2009). *A new history of social welfare* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Dye, T. R. (2013). *Understanding public policy* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Hick, S., & McNutt, J. G. (2002). *Advocacy, activism, and the Internet: Community organization and social policy*. Chicago: Lyceum.
- Hoefler, R. (2012). *Advocacy practice for social justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago: Lyceum.
- Jansson, B. S. (2010). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
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- Popple, P. R., & Leighninger, L. (2011). *The policy-based profession: An introduction to social welfare policy analysis for social workers* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Boston: Pearson.
- Ritter, J. A. (2013). *Social work policy practice: Changing our community, nation, and the world*. Boston: Pearson.
- Schneider, R. L., & Lester, L. (2001). *Social work advocacy: A new framework for action*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole/Wadsworth.
- Segal, E. A. (2010). *Social welfare policy and social programs: A values perspective* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage.
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- Smucker, B. (1999). *The nonprofit lobbying guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Independent Sector.  
Available at: [http://www.independentsector.org/lobby\\_guide](http://www.independentsector.org/lobby_guide)
- Wilson, J. Q., & Dilulio, J. J. (2010). *American government: Institutions and policies: The essentials*. (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

**Appendix A: Plan for Policy Analysis and Action Project**

Your name:

Number and title of bill you will analyze:

Describe the bill in a few sentences:

Groups, organizations, individuals you plan to interview (include dates and times of scheduled interviews):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Others (include dates and times of scheduled interviews) :

Meetings you might attend related to this assignment (include date and time of meetings):

## Appendix B: Grading Rubric for Policy Analysis and Action Project

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Total points earned (60 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

### POLICY BRIEF GRADING RUBRIC: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Completeness & Thoroughness (10 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Organization & clarity (10 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Referencing (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Originality & Creativity (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Recommendations (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Conclusions (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

### EDITORIAL/LETTER, TESTIMONY & CRITIQUES: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_

Editorial/Letter to the Editor: points earned (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

Written Testimony (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

Oral Testimony (5 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR Critiques of Classmates (3 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

### PLAN: Sub T: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan for Policy Project (2 pts max): \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C: Required Headers for Major Sections in the Policy Brief  
(Note: You may add subheaders, as needed.)

Cover Sheet (does NOT count towards the total page count)

Executive Summary (This is an abstract of your policy brief so you write it last and it is only due when you turn in the FINAL policy brief on the last day of class.)

Introduction to the Bill (Name; Title; & summary of the facts about the bill.)  
(Balanced.)

Important Information (Facts about the bigger topic area, as needed. Include graphs, charts, demographics, and other statistics, as you think best.)  
(Balanced.)

Analysis (Heart of the policy brief; synergistic amalgamation of important research information across no less than 10 of the best research articles related to your topic area. Make sure you have at least two different authors cited in each paragraph. List citations liberally.) (Remain balanced showing both sides of the issue. Do NOT reveal where you stand in this section.)

Recommendations [Those of article authors, if pertinent, and your own recommendations. You may now show where you stand on the policy brief major issue. You may use bullets for each recommendation and make sure you list one or more citations with each one. If it is YOUR idea, put (Author). ]

Conclusions [Those of article authors, if pertinent, and your own conclusions. You may continue to show where you stand on the policy brief major issue. You may use bullets for each conclusion and make sure you list one or more citations with each one. If it is YOUR idea, put (Author). ]

**Appendix D: Letter to the Editor Assignment Details:**

Letters to the editor can be written any time you want to shape public opinion, tell others how you feel about people, programs, or ideas, or just inform the public on a certain issue. They are a great way to increase awareness of the issues to advocate for a cause.

Strategies for an effective letter to the editor:

- EXPLAIN WHY THE ISSUE IS IMPORTANT.
- BE CLEAR IN SHOWING WHY THIS WILL HAVE GOOD OR BAD RESULTS. • STATE YOUR OPINION ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.
- CHECK YOUR LETTER TO MAKE SURE IT'S CLEAR AND TO THE POINT.
- Be quick
- Be concise

Step 1: Read the examples of the attached letter to the editor.

Step 2: Choose one of the attached articles to write a letter to the editor.

Step 3: Write a 150 word letter to the editor.

Step 4: Submit your letter to the editor. Go to <http://www.statesman.com/opinion/letters/form/>

The Austin American-Statesman encourages letters from readers. Please include a name, address and daytime and evening phone numbers so that authorship can be confirmed if your letter is chosen for publication.

Step 5: Attach a copy of the content of your letter to the editor so the instructor can read it.

Particular attention will be paid to the degree by which the letter to the editor assesses how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.

## Appendix E. Rubric for Grading Letter to Editor Assignment

### Competency 5:

- **Engage in Policy Practice:** Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.
- **Exemplary/Excellent:** Letter to Editor clearly and thoroughly assesses how social welfare and economic policies impact service delivery and access.
- **Proficient/Good:** Letter to Editor sufficiently assesses how social welfare and economic policies impact service delivery and access.
- **Acceptable/Fair:** Letter to Editor assesses some aspects of how social welfare and economic policies impact service delivery and access.
- **Insufficient/Poor:** Letter to Editor of how social welfare and economic policies impact service delivery and access are not assessed or are inadequately assessed.