## SW420: POVERTY AND SOCIAL POLICY

**Fall 2016**

**Instructor:** Marah A. Curtis, Ph.D. ([mcurtis3@wisc.edu](mailto:mcurtis3@wisc.edu))

**Class Time:** Tuesday, 10:15-12:10

**Location:** Social Work, Room 110

**Office:** Room 303, Social Work

**Office hours/Professor:** Thursday, 11:00 - noon or by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** (Eun Ha Namkung, namkung@wisc.edu)

### I. Catalogue Description

This course examines the nature and dimensions of poverty in the United States, considers individual and social consequences of poverty, and examines historic and contemporary approaches to ameliorating poverty including review of major poverty and social welfare policy and programs. This is a Service Learning course that requires 25 hours of supervised volunteer experience in an agency that addresses, in some way, the causes and consequences of poverty.

### II. Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the historical context, social science literature and analytic tools used to understand poverty and the application to social welfare policy in the U.S.. The community learning component provides concrete experience in how an agency takes on the causes and consequences of poverty through agency, mission, services and practice.

### Competencies addressed in course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignment(s) measuring behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;</td>
<td>Assignment 1 Assignment 3 Roundtable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.</td>
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<td>• Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.</td>
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<td>2.1.3: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.</td>
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<td>• Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.</td>
<td>Assignment 1 Assignment 2 Assignment 3 Roundtable</td>
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<td>• Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.</td>
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IV. Class Session Topics and Readings

Week 1: September 6: Overview of the course
- expectations
- syllabus
- structure of class
- assignments
- community learning
  - What does this mean?
  - How does a student learner do this?
  - How to make use of resources in developing a relationship with a community partner?
  - How to enter into a community as a student learner?

Resources:
Community Standards for Service Learning Brochure, Morgridge Center for Public Service

Week 2: September 13: “Pauperism”: Conceptions of the poor in 19th century America
- historical understanding of the poor
- historical explanations for poverty
- origins of “the deserving” and “undeserving poor”
- the relevance of gender in early relief systems

Readings:

Week 3: September 20: The modern welfare state, race and compromise
- race, politics and leverage
- how New Deal compromises influenced the Great Society programs
- War on Poverty – programs, approaches and policies
  - what programs did we develop and why

Readings:
**Week 4: September 27: Definitions and trends in poverty**
- relative and absolute definitions of poverty
- the relationship between poverty measurement and societal goals
- U.S. poverty level and trends compared to similar nations

**Readings:**


**Week 5: October 4: The significance of welfare reform in the poverty conversation**
- the precursors to reform
- political alignments
- What do we know now, where can we go?

**Readings:**


**Week 6: October 11: Employment and poverty: What are the issues?**
- the working poor
- the nature of low-wage work

**Readings:**


**Assignment 1 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 10:00 a.m. on October 11 (Week 6).**

**Week 7: October 18: Race/ethnicity and poverty**
assessments of poverty research as an enterprise  
urban poverty: William Julius Wilson for the 21st century  
the role of context in poverty research and policymaking

Readings:


Week 8: October 25: Theories of poverty: how place and space matter

the use of theory in the construction of poverty policy  
how place and space matter in poverty strategies  
urban, rural and suburban poverty

Readings:


Week 9: November 1: Immigration, work and poverty

recent immigration trends in the United States  
immigrants and low-wage work  
health, housing and citizenship status

Readings:


Week 10: November 8: Women and poverty: Caregiving, societal change and policy lag

What are the implications of unpaid household and caregiving labor?  
How have significant demographic changes affected the economic position of women?
Readings:


Assignment 2 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 10:00 a.m. on November 8 (Week 10).

Week 11: November 15: Poverty during childhood: implications for policy

- dynamics of childhood poverty
- theoretical concerns
- challenges in studying childhood poverty and outcomes

Readings:


Week 12: November 22: Health, well-being and poverty

- the social determinants of health
- healthcare reform

Readings:


THANKSGIVING RECESS: November 24 – November 27

Week 13: November 29: Housing, race and poverty: a persistent knot

- housing as a “bundle”
- housing and well-being
- residential segregation and poverty
Readings:


Assignment 3 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 5:00pm on December 2.

Week 14: December 6:

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Week 15: December 13:

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

There is no required text for this course.

ARTICLES: All articles are available in electronic (PDF) form on the SW420 “Learn@UW” webpage.

Course Web Site
Articles and additional class materials will be available on the class web site available through Learn@UW, which can be accessed from the academic tab in My UW (near the course descriptions) or https://learnuw.wisc.edu/. Use your net ID and password to log on to the class website. The web site includes:

• Syllabus
• Readings
• Memorandum of Understanding, Community Learning Commitment Form
• Community Learning Student Timesheet
• Course Announcements

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Students are expected to:

• Attend class weekly and read required material prior to class;
• Actively participate in class exercises
• Engage in community learning
  o Complete a “Memorandum of Understanding” signed by the student and agency contact and give to the TA
  o Complete the “Community Learning Student Timesheet” signed by student and agency contact, hand in to TA on or before 12/13/16
• Regularly check your university email account and the course website for communication from instructor and teaching assistant;
• Turn off cell phones and beepers during the class
• Complete 3 graded assignments and 1 presentation

**Exams**: There will be three written graded assignments and one presentation

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**Assignment 1: Poverty Problem and Agency Mission**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop analytic skills to understand policies and programs that address poverty. This is the first of 3 assignments, each sequentially designed to deepen your knowledge about the area of poverty that is most interesting to you. You are given the opportunity to choose your community learning agency in line with a poverty problem and program designed to address this need. Through each assignment you will increase your understanding of the dimensions of the problem and learn how to integrate various sources of knowledge (government reports, social science literature, evaluation reports, agency data).

**Paper Requirements:**

This paper should be 5 pages in length. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 5 external references. Use APA style with in-text parenthetical references as well as a reference list. The reference list is not included in the page limit. Include a cover page with your name, paper title and course number.

**Due Date:**

Assignment 1 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 10:00 a.m. on October 11 (Week 6). Late papers will not be accepted.

**Points**: 20

**Your paper should address these points:**

1) Identify an aspect of poverty that you are compelled to address with policy. Choose wisely as you will continue to analyze this poverty problem throughout the semester. Use high quality secondary sources (i.e. government reports, peer reviewed journal articles) to make the case that the problem you identified is important for policy to address.

2) Identify a community learning placement that is meant to address the aspect of poverty you have identified. Use high quality secondary sources to substantiate the link between the program you identify and its poverty reducing properties (i.e. why it works, how it is linked to #1).
Assignment 2: Problem Statement

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to help you create a powerful and compelling problem statement. The difference between this assignment and the first is the clarity, logic and structure of your argument. You are given the opportunity to integrate new, varied data sources that allow you to make a convincing case for why this problem matters. You accomplish this by focusing on the use of data to substantiate the prevalence/incidence, trends and changes over time in the problem as well as the impact on key demographic groups.

Paper Requirements:

This paper should be 2-3 pages in length. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 4 new, external references. Use APA style with in-text parenthetical references as well as a reference list. The reference list is not included in the page limit. Include a cover page with your name, paper title and course number.

Due Date:

Assignment 2 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 10:00 a.m. on November 8 (Week 10). Late papers will not be accepted.

Points: 20

Your paper should address this outline in a narrative format:

1. Problem Statement
   a. Introduction of poverty problem
      i. Scope and nature of the problem
      ii. Prevalence/incidence, trends, changes over time
      iii. Impacts on key demographic groups

2. Community Learning Agency
   a. Introduce the agency you have chosen and how it addresses the problem. It should flow logically from your problem statement.
Assignment 3: Poverty Program Analysis Paper

Purpose:

The purpose of this final assignment is to allow you to integrate all you have learned about the poverty problem and program you have chosen to focus on for the semester. Class lectures and exercises mirror the analytic tools you will use to build your own analysis.

Paper Requirements:

This paper should be 8-10 pages in length. WE WILL STOP READING AT THE 10TH PAGE. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 10 external references. Use APA style with in-text parenthetical references as well as a reference list. The reference list is not included in the page limit. Include a cover page with your name, paper title and course number.

Due Date:

Assignment 3 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 5:00pm on December 2. Late papers will not be accepted.

Points: 30

Note: The outline lays out the information you must include in your final paper. You are encouraged to use substantively useful titles for each section. The outline is the structure, you provide the substance.

Your paper should address this outline in narrative format:

1. Problem Statement
   a. Introduction of poverty problem
      i. Scope and nature of the problem
      ii. Prevalence/incidence, trends, changes over time
         iii. Impacts on key demographic groups

2. Social Program/Strategy
   b. Introduce the program you have chosen to address #1
      i. Discuss related attempts to address this problem through policy
      ii. Defend why you have chosen to focus on a.

   c. Context of Program/Strategy
      i. Origins of program
      ii. Current structure of program
         1. Kind of benefit (cash/in-kind/social service/information/activity)
         2. Funding Mechanism (how is agency funded)
         3. Eligibility (What determines who receives services/assistance and how)
3. Evaluation of Program/Strategy
d. Review of program evaluation or outcome studies in literature for type of program
   i. What is the evidence regarding effectiveness?
   ii. What are the strengths/weaknesses?
e. Recommendations from literature review, and your supported analysis of the
   literature
   i. Elements of program/strategy that function effectively
   ii. Elements which should be changed or improved
      1. feasibility of suggested changes
f. Brief summary

For a useful guide on APA documentation see the UW Writing Center web page
(http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html). Material that is not correctly cited is
considered plagiarized and provides grounds for academic discipline. (see UW-Madison School of

Presentations

Each student will have 6-8 minutes to present their semester long analysis. What is the problem?
What does the agency do? Is it effective? What are some strengths and challenges? What might
you recommend? What do you want the presentation audience to “do” with your analysis?
Presentation guidelines will be provided in class. Community partners may choose to attend class
presentations.

Community Learning

The purpose of community learning for this course, is to gain experience in an agency that, in
some way, addresses the causes and/or consequences of poverty. This “hands-on” experience will
allow you to understand the workings of the welfare state in a direct way through interaction with
agency personnel, advocates and consumers. As students entering into a community agency, it is
important to use the resources provided in class to establish appropriate, respectful relationships
across all interactions. Students are encouraged to select an agency that will excite and facilitate
learning. A limited list of potential community partners will be handed out in class. This list
evolves and offers suggestions, choosing one of these agencies is in no way a requirement.
Students are free to choose opportunities that are most compelling to them.

Memorandum of Understanding for Community Learning

This document is to be completed and signed by the student and community agency contact and
handed in to the TA.

The agency agrees to:
- Provide 25 hours of supervised volunteer experience to the student
- Orient student to agency operation, mission, structure and expectations
- Designate a staff person to serve as the primary supervisor for the student
- Provide feedback to student to facilitate community learning

The student agrees to:
- Serve 25 hours over the Fall 2016 Semester
- Adhere to the Morgridge Center Community Standards for Service Learning for students
- Read and consider article on cultural competence handed out on Class 1
- Establish a mutually agreed-upon schedule with the agency to fulfill commitment
- Notify the agency supervisor when circumstances alter the agreed-upon schedule
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding all client information

The instructor agrees to:
- Explain the objective of the community learning experience in class
- Provide weekly classroom time for reflection on community learning in small group exercises
- Provide structured class exercises to integrate community learning with written assignments and required readings
- Provide the support of the Teaching Assistant to integrate learning with classwork
- Invite community partners to student presentations

**Final grades will be calculated as follows:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Poverty Problem and Agency Mission</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Problem Statement</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Poverty Program Analysis Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Learning Completion</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation in class exercises</td>
<td>10</td>
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**Grading**

There are not extra credit or make-up assignments. Grades on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

- **A** 94-100 outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas
- **AB** 88-93 surpasses expectations in most areas
- **B** 82-87 surpasses expectations in some areas
- **BC** 76-81 meets expectations in most areas; above in others
- **C** 70-75 meets expectations in most areas
- **D** 64-69 below expectations in all areas
- **F** <64 fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work
Attendance and Participation in Lecture and Class Exercises

Class will include group exercises designed to deepen content covered in readings and lectures and integrate community learning. Your preparedness and willingness to engage in each class determines the participation portion of your grade.

Note to Students

Your goal for this and other courses should be to make the most of your learning experience, and not simply “get an A”. Your expectations about the grades you receive on assignments should be wholly based on (1) the extent to which you respond accurately to assignment objectives, (2) the quality of your writing (to include grammar and spelling, organization and clarity), (3) the extent to which you demonstrate critical thinking related to course readings and topics, and (4) the extent and quality of your participation in class and group exercises. If there is something about an assignment that is unclear to you, it is your job to bring this to the attention of your teaching assistant or to the professor. Grade expectations should NOT be based on what you have received in other courses. If you have an issue with a grade you receive in this course, please document the reasons for your appeal in writing with specific attention to the four points raised above.

Student Behavior Policy

Respect, cordiality, patience and openness to the ideas of others are expected in lectures, discussion and group exercises. Learning requires the willingness to risk, the ability to listen as well as bravery to venture a reasoned opinion. We will create and maintain a climate where this is possible for all participants.

Disability Accommodations

Those students who are registered with the McBurney Center must give the instructor a copy of their VISA within the first two weeks of the semester so that any needed accommodations can be made. If the student has not given the copy of the VISA to the instructor, an accommodation will not be made.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is required and expected in this course and all other courses offered by the School of Social Work. If you are found to have plagiarized a written assignment or cheated on an exam, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment/exam and be subject to further disciplinary action consistent with the university and School of Social Work policy.

Academic honesty is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to: (1) uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work; (2) refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community; and (3) foster a high sense of academic integrity and responsibility on the part of the University community.

Academic misconduct is often thought of as “cheating” in the pursuit of one’s academic endeavors. Academic misconduct rules are found in UWS 14. Information on academic misconduct rules and procedures and plagiarism can be found at the following websites:

College of Letters & Science Handbook definition of plagiarism as academic misconduct: http://www.ls.wisc.edu/handbook/ChapterSix/chVI-11.htm

“Avoiding Plagiarism” from The Writing Center: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html

There are two major forms which plagiarism takes:
1. The use of direct quotes from others’ written or spoken work and presenting them as one’s own words without using proper quotation marks or offsetting.
   Direct Quote: To repeat verbatim or to copy verbatim the words of another.
2. The other major form of plagiarism where a student (or someone else) paraphrases the ideas or research findings of another person(s), but fails to identify the source of the ideas.
   A paraphrase is a restatement of a text or passage in another form or other words (i.e., putting into your own words the ideas of another person).

Code of Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities & Plagiarism
BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as well as adhere to the Plagiarism Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.