I. Course 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 Community Learning course that requires 25 hours of supervised volunteer experience in an agency that addresses, in some way, the causes and/or consequences of poverty.

Attributes and Designations: This course counts as Liberal Arts and Sciences credit in L&S.

Requisites: Jr. Standing

How credit hours are met: The credit for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times (Tuesdays, 10:15-12:10), community learning, and other course activities (reading, writing, group exercises, preparing presentations). The syllabus includes additional information about expectations for student work and community learning.

II. Course Overview

Social Work 420 is an elective course for social work (BSWs) and social welfare majors. 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.

III. Learning Outcomes: Competency Descriptions and Dimensions
The overall objective of this course is for all students to develop the analytic, cognitive, experiential and self-awareness skills necessary to effectively engage in policy practice. It is particularly useful for BSW students to know that social work education is delivered by a competency-based curriculum. Competency is achieved through mastery of course content through course activities, readings, assignments, exams as well as behaviors learned in field experiences in other courses. Knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes\(^1\) comprise the competencies. This course is structured to help students demonstrate understanding and mastery of the knowledge, values, skills and affective processes relevant to the competencies described in Appendix A.

IV. Course Content

Week 1: January 23: 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


In class discussion exercises and activities:
- Who we are? Why this matters?
- What is community learning?
- Searching for a community learning site.

---

\(^1\) Cognitive and affective processes include critical thinking (i.e., the process of conceptualizing, analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing multiple sources of information generated by observation, reflection and reasoning), affective reactions (i.e., the way in which emotions influence thinking and subsequently behavior), and the exercise of judgment (i.e., the capacity to perceive and discern multiple sources of information to form an opinion).
Week 2: January 30: “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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Architecture of the Great Society
- Video on “American Exceptionalism”
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, “Views on the Poor in the 19th Century”

Week 3: February 6: 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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- New Deal to the Great Society: evolution of poverty programs
- Audio, how Sarge Shriver introduced Great Society Programs
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 4: February 13: 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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Definitions and measurement of poverty
- Video, how major news outlets report annual poverty measures
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 5: February 20: 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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Welfare Reform Levers: structure, what changed and how, caseload and research results
- Video, “15-Year Anniversary of Welfare Reform”; presidential news conference on immediately following the signing of PROWRA
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 6: February 27: Employment and poverty: What are the issues?
- the working poor
- the nature of low-wage work

Readings:


Assignment 1 due – Canvas submission no later than 10:00 a.m. on February 27 (Week 6). Late papers will not be accepted.

In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Employment: under, discouraged workers, Bureau of Labor Statistics data
- Video, “low wage work”, “minimum wage” – analysis of the arguments used to support labor market interventions
- Exercises in “How can you be working and poor: Thinking about low-wage work from the work side provided by Prof. Anna Haley-Lock, Rutgers School of Social Work”
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 7: March 6: Race/ethnicity and poverty

- assessment 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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Lecture: “Race, ethnicity and poverty policy: How the conversation is framed and why that matters.”
- Video, “More than just race: Being black and poor in the inner city” (William Julius Wilson)
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 8: March 13: 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:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Lecture: “Place and poverty: implications of geography”
- Video, “Rural poverty in America, 1965”, produced by the USDA
- Video, “A Conversation with Unita Blackwell” (“maximum feasible participation of the poor”)
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 9: March 20: Immigration, work and poverty

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

Readings:


In class lecture, exercises and activities:
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, current context, mixed-status families, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

SPRING RECESS: MARCH 24 – APRIL 1

Week 10: April 3: 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:

Routledge, pp. 26-47.

Peterson, J. (2001). Feminization of poverty. In J. Peterson & M. Lewis (Eds.), The Elgar Companion to...

In class lecture, exercises and activities:

- Gender, race, household composition and poverty rates
- Website source, “Institute for Women’s Policy Research”
- Video, “The limits of capitalism” (Nancy Folbre on capitalism, women and political economy)
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings and video, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

**Assignment 2 due – Canvas submission no later than 10:00 a.m. on April 3 (Week 10). Late papers will not be accepted.**

**Week 11: April 10: Poverty during childhood: implications for policy**

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

**Readings:**


In class lecture, exercises and activities:

- Percentage of U.S. children living in poverty; international comparisons
- Video, “Britain’s War on Poverty”, Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings and video, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

**Week 12: April 17: Health, well-being and poverty**

- the social determinants of health

**Readings:**


In class lecture, exercises and activities:

- Housing and health: Moving to Opportunity findings
- Video, “How economic inequality harms societies”; Richard Wilkinson
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings and video, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Week 13: April 24: Class Presentations

Assignment 3 due – Canvas submission no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 27 a.m. (Friday of Week 13). Late papers will not be accepted.

Week 14: May 1: Class Presentations and Course Evaluation

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

There is no required text for this course.

Course Web Site
Readings and additional class materials will be available on the class web site available through Canvas. You will find the:

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Community Learning Commitment Form
- Community Learning Student Timesheet

VI. Evaluation: 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
  - Complete a “Memorandum of Understanding” signed by the student and agency contact and give to the TA
  - Complete the “Community Learning Student Timesheet” signed by student and agency contact, hand in to TA on or before 5/1/18
- 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

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 – Canvas submission no later than 10:00 a.m. on February 27 (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 – Canvas submission no later than 10:00 a.m. on April 3 (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. This section 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
Due Date:

Assignment 3 due – Canvas submission no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 27 a.m. (Friday of Week 13). 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 Social Work’s Policy on Plagiarism below).

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 the non-profit domain 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 and/or via training at the Morgridge Center to establish appropriate, respectful relationships across all interactions. Students are encouraged to select an agency that will excite and facilitate learning. A 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 Spring 2018 Semester
- Adhere to the Morgridge Center Community Standards for Service Learning for students
- Read and consider article on cultural competence noted in the syllabus for Week 1, available on Canvas
- 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 and/or class discussion
- Provide structured class exercises to integrate community learning with written assignments and required readings
- Provide the support of the Teaching Assistant to integrate community learning with classwork
- Invite community partners to student presentations

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>surpasses expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>surpasses expectations in some areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>meets expectations in most areas; above in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>meets expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading

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

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.

VII. Course Policies

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

Students requiring accommodation, as approved by the McBurney Center, must provide their instructors with a copy of their Verified Individualized Services and Accommodation (VISA) within the first two weeks of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized, so that any needed accommodations can 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:

[http://students.wisc.edu/saja/index.html](http://students.wisc.edu/saja/index.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.

**Appendix A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency and Description</th>
<th>Course Content Relevant to Dimensions that Comprise the Competency *</th>
<th>Location in Syllabus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Engage in Policy Practice</td>
<td>Lecture, readings, small and large group discussion related to (K,S,V,C &amp; AP)</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Architecture of the Great Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Video on “American Exceptionalism”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, “Views on the Poor in the 19th Century”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New Deal to the Great Society: evolution of poverty programs</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Audio, how Sarge Shriver introduced Great Society Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services; assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

- Definitions and measurement of poverty
- Video, how major news outlets report annual poverty measures
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Welfare Reform Levers: structure, what changed and how, caseload and research results
- Video, “15-Year Anniversary of Welfare Reform”; presidential news conference on immediately following the signing of PROWRA
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided

- Employment: under, discouraged workers, Bureau of Labor Statistics data
- Video, “low wage work”, “minimum wage” – analysis of the arguments used to support labor market interventions
- Exercises in “How can you be working and poor: Thinking about low-wage work from the work side provided by Prof. Anna Haley-Lock, Rutgers School of Social Work”
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice

Assignment 1: Poverty problem and Agency Mission
Assignment 2: Problem statement

9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy,

Lecture, readings, small and large group discussion related to (K,S,V,C & AP)
- “Race, ethnicity and poverty policy: How the conversation is framed and why that matters.”
- Video, “More than just race: Being black and poor in the inner city” (William Julius Wilson)
- Small group exercise: critical examination of readings, discussion questions provided
- Community learning integration exercise:
| Gender, race, household composition and poverty rates |
| Website source review, “Institute for Women’s Policy Research” |
| Video, “The limits of capitalism” (Nancy Folbre on capitalism, women and political economy) |
| Small group exercise: critical examination of readings and video, discussion questions provided |
| Community learning integration exercise: policy and practice |

Assignment 3: Poverty program analysis paper
Presentations: Community Learning Placement and Program Analysis