**SW 875: Health, Aging and Disability Policy and Services**  
**Fall 2017**

**Instructor:** Alison Meier, MSW, APSW  
**Class Time:** Saturday, 9:00AM – 11:00AM  
**Location:** UW Madison School of Social Work Room 114  
**Office hours:** By appointment  
**E-mail:** aemeier@wisc.edu

I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION  
This course provides knowledge about the contemporary organization of health care, as well as policies and services for older adults and people with disabilities.

II. COURSE OVERVIEW  
This course meets the Policies and Services requirement for the Advanced Generalist Curriculum. The focus or context for this Policies and Services course is Health and Aging. For non-health and aging focus area students, this course may be taken as a free elective. This course provides knowledge and skills necessary to understand the United States health care system and major legislation established to support the needs of older adults and people with disabilities. The course analyzes legislation, policies, and politics that influence the context of social work practice in this concentration with particular focus on the intended and unintended consequences of policies and implications for social justice. Additionally, the course reviews and discusses the impact of advocacy strategies aimed at developing and/or changing national and local health, aging and disability policy.

III. COURSE COMPETENCY, DESCRIPTION AND DIMENSIONS CHART  
Social Work Education is framed by a competency-based approach to curriculum design. At the conclusion of their education, social work students are expected to be competent in 9 core areas. Competency is achieved through mastery of course content as measure through course activities, readings and assignments and behaviors learned in field experiences, and which are derived from social work knowledge, values, skills and cognitive and affective processes. The competencies addressed in this course can be found in Appendix A.

IV. COURSE CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</table>
| 1  
9/9/17   | Welcome and Introductions  
Review Course Objectives  
Introduction to the US Health Care System:  
- Structure, Organization, Financing  
- Comparison to Other Nations | Listen to this short podcast prior to class:  
“‘Maybe we could have bought him a good pair of shoes’: Why peer nations spend less on health care but stay healthier.”  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 9/16/17</td>
<td>The Affordable Care Act:</td>
<td>Adamczyk, A. (July 2017). These are the faces of people with pre-existing conditions. <em>Money Magazine.</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Affordability Provisions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Impact on diverse populations, social justice and human rights</td>
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<td>Week/Date</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Assignment Due</td>
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|           | • Medicaid for Undocumented Immigrants  
| 5 10/7/17 | Medicare:  
             • History and Eligibility  
             • Program Financing  
             • Covered Services: Parts A, B, C, D  
             • Reform Efforts  
| 6 10/14/17 | The Role of Advocacy in Shaping Policy  
              Guest Speaker: TBD  
              Mid-Term Exam Review | Readings TBD | |
| 7 10/21/17 | Mid-Term Exam | | Mid-Term Exam (during class) |
| 8 10/28/17 | The Americans with Disabilities Act:  
              • The Disability Rights Movement  
              • Demographics of Americans with Disabilities  
              • ADA History and Purpose  
              • ADA Amendments of 2008  
              • The Olmstead Decision  
| 9 11/4/17 | The Older Americans Act:  
              • Demographics of the Aging Population | AARP. Fact Sheet: The Older Americans Act. | |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10 11/11/17 | Social Security and SSI:  
- The Social Security Act  
- Disability Determination Process  
- SS Retirement  
- SSDI  
- SSI  
- Program Solvency and Reform Proposals  
| 11 11/18/17 | Health Care Decision-Making:  
- Authorized Decision-Makers  
- Living Will  
- Power of Attorney for Health Care  
- Guardianship  
- Supported Decision-Making  
- Impact on diverse populations, social justice and human rights  
| 11/25/17 | THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS | | |
Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | • Legacy Waivers  
• Family Care  
• IRIS  
• Impact on diverse populations, 
| 13  
12/9/17 | Final Exam Review  
Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations | | |
| 14  
12/16/17 | Final Exam | Final Exam (during class) | |

V. TEXT AND READING MATERIALS FOR THE COURSE

There are no required text books for this course. Articles and additional class materials will be available on the class website available through Canvas.

VI. EVALUATION: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Assignments Due Dates and Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Impact Reflection Paper</td>
<td>October 7, 2017</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>October 21, 2017</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy Portfolio</td>
<td>December 2, 2017</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>December 16, 2017</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale: Final grades will be assigned with the following grading scale for graduate courses:

A 94-100 Outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas  
AB 88-93 Surpasses expectations in many areas  
B 82-87 Meets expectations in all areas  
BC 76-81 Meets expectations in some areas; below in others  
C 70-75 Below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate work  
D 64-69 Below expectations in all areas  
F <64 Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work
Assignment Descriptions, Instructions and Grading Criteria:

Class Participation (Ongoing; 10%)

Your presence and active engagement in this seminar throughout the semester will allow us to collectively establish an intellectually and emotionally safe environment for learning. In addition to class attendance expectations, you are also expected to participate through class discussions, inquiry, and being actively and thoughtfully engaged in class exercises. Net of attendance, highest participation grades will go to students who achieve an effective balance of speaking/inquiring and actively listening to others.

Policy Impact Reflection Paper (October 7, 2017; 20%)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain a deeper understanding of one of the policies discussed in class by exploring how it directly impacts someone’s life.

**Instructions:** Identify and interview an individual (client, friend, family member, co-worker, etc) who has been impacted by one of the policies discussed in class. Write a 3-4 page double-spaced paper based on your interview that includes the following:

1. Describe the person you are interviewing (do not use the person’s real name). Include a description of relevant demographics such as age, sex, race, socioeconomic status, disability status, living situation or other relevant information.
2. Describe the policy that has impacted this person. Include the name, a brief history and the purpose/objectives of the policy.
3. Describe the person’s experience with the policy (this may include navigating eligibility/enrollment) and how the policy has impacted them. The impact may be emotional, economic, related to their health and/or well-being, living situation or other life changes.
4. Reflect on whether the impact of the policy supported or impeded the person. Based on your reflection, address the following questions:
   a. What parts of this policy are working well and what might account for this?
   b. What can be done to support/advance parts of the policy that are working?
   c. What parts of this policy are not working well and what might account for this?
   d. What changes could be made to improve to improve the policy?

**Grading:** This assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale and is worth 20% of your overall grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Description of the person you are interviewing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Description of the policy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Description of person’s experience and impact of the policy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reflection</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overall organization, grammar and sentence structure</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Midterm Exam (October 21, 2017; 25%)

The exam will focus on terms and concepts discussed during the first half of the semester. It will include short answer/essay, true and false and multiple choice questions.
**Advocacy Portfolio (December 2, 2017; 20%)**

**Purpose:** Social workers witness first-hand how local and national policies impact the lives of their clients and as such have a critical responsibility to advocate for policies that advance social justice. The purpose of this assignment is for you to apply strategies of advocacy and social change to advance the health and well-being of a vulnerable population.

**Instructions:** Select a problem/issue that is relevant to class and impacts the health or well-being of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and/or other vulnerable populations. Develop an Advocacy Portfolio with the following 4 components:

1. **Develop a 1 page Advocacy Plan Outline** which includes the following:
   
   **A. Definition of the problem:** Clearly and succinctly state the problem/issue that you will be addressing in no more than one paragraph.
   
   **B. Proposed response:** Clearly and succinctly state the specific response (e.g. policy, legislation, awareness campaign, educational campaign) that you feel will address your stated problem/issue. Statement of the response should be no longer than one paragraph. Ensure that your proposed response is a specific intervention as opposed to a general idea.
   
   **C. Talking points** that are clearly and succinctly stated and could be used by others to promote and support your issue. Each talking point should be bulleted and no more than 3-4 sentences. Your list of talking points must include the following:
   - Briefly explain the problem/issue and why it is important
   - Briefly explain the proposed response and why it will work using data, examples, and stories to support your position. (You will need to use several different talking points)
   - Briefly describe the specific actions people can take to support your proposed response. (You may use several different talking points)

2. **Write a 1 page letter to an elected official or an administrator** to convince them to support your issue. Using a professional and persuasive tone, your letter must include the following:
   - Clearly stated purpose of the letter
   - Summary of the problem/issue and proposed response
   - Explanation of why they should support the proposed response and the positive impact that it will have on the issue/problem. You may also include the negative impact that could result if your proposed response is not implemented. Describe the impact using persuasive data, personal anecdotes, client stories, specific examples, etc.
   - acknowledgment of past support from the official (if applicable)
   - Description of the specific action you are hoping the official will take

3. **Write a 700-1,000 word op-ed column to a paper or magazine** to convince the public to support your issue. Using a persuasive tone, your op-ed must include the following:
   - Introduction that outlines the problem/issue. This needs to grab the reader’s attention right away and interest them in your topic. Why should readers care?
   - Supporting paragraphs that build on your introduction. Provide more information on the problem/issue, your proposed response and the impact that it will have using data, stories, etc. that will resonate with the reader.
   - Conclusion that includes a “call to action” outlining how readers can get involved and ends with another impact statement reiterating importance of the issue.

4. **Develop a reference list** (APA Format) outlining the sources you used to gather information for your portfolio including, readings, magazines, websites, interviews, etc.
Tips and examples of all of the above components are included in materials posted on Canvas.

**Grading:** This assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale and is worth 20% of your overall grade.

**Rubric:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Advocacy Plan Outline:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. <strong>Definition of the Problem:</strong> Completeness of response utilizing instructions above.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. <strong>Proposed Response:</strong> Completeness of response utilizing instructions above.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. <strong>Talking Points:</strong> Completeness of response utilizing instructions above.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Letter to Elected Official:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completeness and effectiveness (persuasive using a professional tone) of letter utilizing the instruction above.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overall organization, grammar and sentence structure.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Op-Ed:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Completeness and effectiveness (persuasive tone) of op-ed utilizing the instructions above.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overall organization, grammar and sentence structure.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Reference List:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Outlines the sources used to gather information for portfolio using APA formatting.</td>
<td>10</td>
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**Final Exam (December 16, 2017; 25%)**

The exam will focus on terms and concepts discussed during the second half of the semester. It will include short answer/essay, true and false and multiple choice.

**VII. COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance Policy**

To ensure a quality educational experience, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time.

- Attendance will be taken at each class and students’ level of participation noted.
- Excused and Unexcused Absences:
  - Two unexcused absences will result in a student’s grade being dropped one full grade.
  - Three unexcused absences will place the student at risk for failing the course.
  - On a case by case basis, it is left to the instructor’s discretion as to what is defined as an excused absence. You will not have the opportunity to complete make-up work to compensate for unexcused absences.
  - Additional graded make-up work appropriate for the content missed during an excused absence may be assigned. This make-up work may consist of an analysis of the required reading, as well as a summary of any power point lecture material and how one might integrate this material into one’s practice.
- Students are responsible for completing any class requirements for the day missed, and for obtaining from a fellow classmate any assignments, materials, and communications missed due to absence, late arrival or early departure.
• Students who must be absent due to inclement weather or other emergencies must contact the instructor prior to the start of the class to be considered for an excused absence.

• Inclement Weather Policy
  o If there is inclement weather across the Program area, students will be expected to check their email prior to leaving for class to confirm whether classes are cancelled.
  o If classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, students should check their email for instructions for how to engage in class material for that day.
  o If classes are not cancelled, but an individual student concludes that s/he cannot safely travel to reach her/his class site, the student must contact her/his instructor(s) regarding her/his plan to not travel. This absence will be considered excused and make up work may be assigned.

**Support for students needing ADA accommodation**
The instructor supports students’ needs to request academic accommodations due to disabilities. Please advise me if you have such a need by week two of the term so the class can work as well as possible for you. If you have a McBurney Visa, please provide it to me as additional guidance for arranging the accommodations you may need for this class.

**Student behavior policy**
It is expected that students conduct themselves ethically and professionally in all aspects of this seminar. This includes confidentiality, proper respect for all members of the class and their clients and agencies, and support and contributions to the learning environment.

In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your classmates, and demonstrate appreciation for the opportunity we have to learn from one another. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and viewpoints even if you disagree with them, and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature discussed in class.

**Code of Ethics, Professional Conduct & Plagiarism:**
Incoming BSW and MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the School’s Principles of Professional Conduct. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct, 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 and in the preparation of course assignments.

**Plagiarism**
The School, University and I take plagiarism very seriously. At any time when you use the words of another person verbatim or even paraphrase them, you must give that person credit. Students found to have plagiarized, intentionally or not, will be disciplined according to University and School policies.

**Technology in class**
A minimal level of external distraction is essential to a productive learning environment. Mobile devices are not to be used in class and must be either silenced or turned off completely. Laptop and tablet computers may be used only for unobtrusive note-taking (and only if there are no complaints from other students). If you choose to use a computer in class for this purpose, you may not have a web browser open at any time.

**Late Assignments**
All assignments are due on the date required by the instructor. Assignments turned in late may be docked 5 percentage points for each day past due.
### Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies and Description</th>
<th>Course Content relevant to Dimensions that Comprise the Competency*</th>
<th>Location in Syllabus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</strong></td>
<td>Lectures, readings and discussions related to social determinants of health and health disparities. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP)</td>
<td>Wk. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced practice social workers demonstrate in a focus area an advanced understanding of how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. They demonstrate comprehension that dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Advanced practice social workers recognize that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as privilege, power, and acclaim, and apply this recognition in their practice. They also demonstrate in practice their understanding of the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, and a recognition of the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, videos and discussions throughout the semester outlining the intended and unintended consequences and impact of health, aging and disability policies on diverse populations, including recognition of the extent to which policies may oppress, marginalize, alienate or create privilege and power. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP) Assignment: Policy Impact Reflection Paper. (K, V, S, CA&amp;P) Assignment: Advocacy Portfolio. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP) Assignment: Mid-Term Exam (K, S, C&amp;AP) Assignment: Final Exam (K, S, C&amp;AP)</td>
<td>Wks. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Syllabus Pg. 6 Syllabus Pg. 7-8 Syllabus Pg. 6 Syllabus Pg. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice</strong></td>
<td>Lectures, readings, videos and discussions throughout the semester outlining the intended and unintended consequences and impact of health, aging and disability policies on diverse populations. Including the positive and negative impacts policies have on the advancement of human rights and social justice. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP) Guest speaker and lecture outlining advocacy’s impact on development of health, aging and disability policy. Assignment: Policy Impact Reflection Paper. (K, V, S, CA&amp;P) Assignment: Advocacy Portfolio. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP)</td>
<td>Wks. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Wk. 6 Syllabus Pg. 6 Syllabus Pgs. 7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies and Description</td>
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<td>Location in Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1.5: Engage in Policy Practice</strong>&lt;br&gt;Advanced Generalist social workers demonstrate a developed understanding that human rights, social justice, social welfare and services in the focus area are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. They understand the history and current structures of social policies and services in the focus area, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development in the focus area. Advanced Generalist social workers understand, demonstrate, and engage policy development and implementation within their focus area practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels to affect change within those settings. They recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy in the focus area. They also demonstrate advanced levels of knowledge about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation in the focus area.</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, videos and discussions throughout the semester outlining the history and current structure of social policies including: The Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Older Americans Act. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP)&lt;br&gt;Lectures, readings, videos and discussions throughout the semester outlining the many influences the impact social policy and discussion policy formation, analysis, implementation and evaluation. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP)&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Policy Impact Reflection Paper. (K, V, S, CA&amp;P)&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Advocacy Portfolio. (K, V, S, C&amp;AP)&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Mid-Term Exam (K, S, C&amp;AP)&lt;br&gt;Assignment: Final Exam (K, S, C&amp;AP)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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*K=Knowledge; V=Values; S=Skills; C&AP=Cognitive and Affective Processes*