I. Catalogue Description
Analysis of policy issues as applied to such fields as poverty, discrimination, crime, physical and mental health on both national and state levels.

II. Course Overview
This course covers U.S. social welfare policy. Students will be introduced to alternative perspectives on social problem analysis and the scope and limitations of social policy and the policy making process. While income support policy is the focus of much of the lecture content and assigned readings, other policies are also covered, and the student is exposed to another area of social policy in more depth through an individualized project. The course is required for MSW students and is a professional foundation course. No previous course work is required.

III. Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors and Assignments
At the end of this course, students are expected to do the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies addressed in course</th>
<th>Practice behaviors addressed in course</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice | 1. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions. | 1. Policy analysis paper  
1. Response papers |
| 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments | 1. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and practice wisdom.  
2. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation.  
3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues. | 1. Response paper, Final  
2. Policy analysis paper, Final  
3. Policy analysis paper |
| 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice | 1. Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power. | 1. Policy analysis paper, Response paper |
2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
1. Understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
3. Engage in practice that advances social and economic justice.

2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
1. Use research evidence to inform practice

2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services
1. Analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being

2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice
1. Continuously discover, appraise and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.

IV. Course Content
The format for this class combines interactive lectures, large and small group discussions and presentations from guest speakers.

Important note: Some of your computers might not be able to open the TV or radio clips through Learn@UW. If happens, use the links provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
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</table>
| Week 1a 10/29 | **Introduction**  
- Review of syllabus, assignments and expectations  
- Why policy matters: a day in your life  
- Brief overview of Macro social work. What is policy? What is social policy?  
- What are inherent tensions in social policies?  
- Why should social workers care about social policy?  

**Required Readings:**  
### Week 1b
**Values and Social Service and Policy**
- How do our values influence our policy making?
- On-going struggle about the size, role and proper functions of government
- How do we think about the welfare state?
- Discuss the context of social problems and discover multiple framings of a social problem.
- Factors influencing social policies
- In Her Shoes Exercise

**Required Readings:**


### Week 2a
**Funding Social Policy**
- How are policies created? Brief review of the federal and state budget process.
- What should a social worker know about the federal and state structures for funding social welfare? How does tax policy impact your work?
- Distribution of welfare benefits in the U.S.

**Social Work Advocacy in the Policy-Making Process**
- How a bill becomes a law
- What is Advocacy: National, State, Local
- Why do social workers need to know policy analysis?
- Guest Speaker: Representative Melissa Sargent, 48th Assembly District

**Required Readings:**


**Optional Reading:**
Week 2b | Poverty in the United States  
- What does it mean to be poor?  
- Examine variation in poverty across groups, lifecycle, family type and geography.  
- How poverty is measured is pivotal  
- Values and beliefs about poverty  

**Required Readings:**  

**Response Paper #1 is Due**

Week 3a | Collective Responses to Poverty  
- The U.S. Safety Net: What we provide and for whom  
- Large scale federal laws: Social Security & PRWORA  
- Discuss the political and philosophical underpinnings that led to the creation of these two policies  

**Required Readings:**  

**Optional Reading:**  
| Week 3b | **Collective Responses to Poverty**  
| - Large scale federal laws: The War on Poverty and the expansion of Social Welfare Policies. What were its major initiatives, why was it waged and what happened?  
| | - Food and shelter policies  
| Week 4a | **Social Policy and Group Based Inequality**  
| 11/19 | - What are the costs of discrimination? Who bears them?  
| | - Discrimination and policy  
| Week 4b | **Social policy and community/neighborhood**  
| | - Review differences by community in the United States  
| | - Analyze how housing and other policies shape our communities.  
| | - Case studies: Ferguson, New Orleans, Harlem and Appalachia |
**Required Readings:**


**Optional Reading:**


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**Social problem description due**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5a</th>
<th>Social policy and immigration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Examine the history of immigration in the US</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does the federal government, state and courts determine who can live legally in the US.</td>
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<td>Guest Speaker: Ramona Natera, Immigration Attorney</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Required Readings:**


**Social Policy and Health Care**
- Overview of the structure of the U.S. health care system and the social values that sustain it
- Health disparities: Examine how race, ethnicity, age and neighborhood impacts overall health.
- The current status of health care reform legislation

**Goals:** We will review the origins of the federal government’s role in providing health care coverage, and identify the pressing health care needs of sub-
populations.

**Required Readings:**  *chose 1 of the 3 New York Times articles*


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**Week 5b**

**Children’s Policy**
- Understand the scope of child poverty.
- Children as students
- Children as victims
- Children as villains

**Goals:** In this class session, we will spend time talking about child policy and the social policies created to alleviate child poverty. We will use the education system as a case study of how seemingly unrelated policies can play out within a large institution. We will also look at policy changes within the child welfare and education fields, the value underlying these policies and unintended outcomes associated with their implementation.

**Required Readings:**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6a</th>
<th>Social Policy and Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>In what unique ways are women impacted by policy decisions?</td>
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<td>Case Study: Violence Against Women Act</td>
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**Optional Reading:**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6b</th>
<th>Social Policy and families</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Cross–national comparisons of family leave, childcare and child tax credit policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage promotion initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining a family: defining a marriage – implications for social inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The role of values and beliefs in the social policy process. Explore philosophical clashes in U.S. social policy, specifically the “Defense of Marriage” Act legislative proposal.</td>
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**Goals:** This week we will consider a range of policies designed to support families in employment and caregiving role, and consider underlying assumptions about work, caregiving, class and sexual orientation reflected in the policies. We will discuss current and past federal policy initiatives on marriage promotion & analyze “Defense of Marriage” legislative proposals using the social justice framework.

**Required Reading:**
**Recommended Reading:**

**policy analysis paper is due**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7a</th>
<th>Social policy, older adults and Individuals with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>• Controversies in defining “old age” and “disability”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social factors affecting morbidity and mortality rates among the elderly and individuals with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Goals:** We will consider how definitions of old age and disability lead to social exclusion from resource and support systems; how demographic trends in aging interact with existing Medicare policy; and whether health care coverage along can ensure adequate access to health care services.

**Wrap-up, Evaluation**

**Required Readings:**


| Week 7b | Final Exam |

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**V. Reading Materials for the Course**
You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course. I have assigned a combination of chapters from textbooks, in depth articles and podcasts. The assigned readings are uploaded on Learn@UW. I also provided the links within the syllabus when available. Students are also required to search out and read supplemental material pertinent to their individual assignments.

It is highly recommended that students regularly read a newspaper. There are several that can be received on-line, free of charge (including the New York Times: [http://www.nytimes.com/](http://www.nytimes.com/)). The
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (http://www.jsonline.com/) is a good source for state policy coverage and the Wisconsin State Journal or Madison.com provides reasonable coverage of both state and local news (http://host.madison.com/). Madison365 is another good source of news http://madison365.com.

**Web sites that have working papers or data relevant to course or papers:**
Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/
National Poverty Center http://www.npc.umich.edu
Institute for Research on Poverty http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp
MDRC http://www.mdrc.org
Urban Institute http://www.urban.org
Brookings Institution http://www.brookings.edu
U.S. Census Bureau http://www.census.gov
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities http://www.cbpp.org
Center for Law and Social Policy http://www.clasp.org
Fragile Families and Child Well-Being http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/
Heritage Foundation http://www.heritage.org
Future of Children www.futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals
Institute for Women’s Policy Research http://www.iwpr.org
The Century Foundation www.tcf.org

**VI. Evaluation of Student Outcomes: Expectations, Grading Criteria, Required Work and Course Grades**

**Grading Structure:**
A total of 100 points is possible for this course. The final grade will be assigned by weighting each assignment and summing these weights for a total score.

Not attending class can lower your grade; active participation can increase your grade if you are on the margin. Late papers will result in a lower grade.

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

**Assignments:**
- Group Participation 10 (10% of final grade)
- 2 Response Papers 30 (15% and 15% of final grade)
- Social Policy description 15 (15% of final grade)
- Policy Analysis Paper 25(25% of final grade)
- Final 20 (20% of final grade)

**Points for final grade:**
- 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

Grading Guidelines:

• A student may appeal a grade, but must do so in writing, being sure to support his or her position with substantive arguments.
• Written portions of all assignments are to be typed, spell-checked, proofed for grammatical errors, and well organized. Points will be deducted from the grade when the work is sloppy or hard to follow. If a student needs assistance with writing, the Campus Writing Center is available as a free resource to all students.
• Issues of academic misconduct are considered extremely serious. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation or fabrication of assignments, can result in course failure. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all documents and materials used to inform and support assignments are appropriately and correctly cited, using the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Associations.

Submitting Assignments:

• Final assignments must be submitted in the UW Drop box.
• All assignments are due at the start of class on the date they are listed in the syllabus. The Drop box will close by 8:30am on the date that they are due.
• The Instructor will not be available to answer questions related to the assignment on the night before they are due. Plan your time accordingly.

Guidelines for Writing Assignments:

• As appropriate, provide citation using APA style.
• Papers must be written in 12 point font, double-spaced, and have 1-inch margins.
• Paper should be carefully edited and free of spelling and grammar errors.
• Paper must be well written and easy to understand.
• All assignments are due before the start of class on the date they are listed in the syllabus.

Academic Expectations:

Students are expected to:
• Attend class each session, actively participating in the in-class exercises and discussions. If you cannot attend class, you are responsible for knowing what occurred and for getting any handouts.
• Read critically (and think about) all required assignments before coming to class.
• Complete all assignments by the due dates and times (thus you are expected to plan your life so that you can make the required deadlines in the course).
• inform the instructor during the first week of the semester of any special accommodations needed for meeting class expectations
• Be respectful of the instructor and other class members—a diversity of views and opinions may be articulated during discussions. Respect includes cell phones being turned off and laptops being used in class only for taking notes.

The instructor is expected to:
• Assure that course objectives are being met.
• Be available to students to answer questions through emailed correspondence.
• Give reasonable guidance on preparing for the papers and on other assignments.
• Be open to discussing concerns about the course.

Assignments
1. Participation in Class Discussion and Activities 10 points

Although class sessions will include a variety of learning methods, there will be an emphasis on critical discussion and class activities. Students are expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and show their progress by demonstrating mastery of the weekly readings, by raising issues and by active class participation. Each student should complete the readings each week. Participation credit will additionally include:

- Each student leading a small group discussion by preparing questions based on the weeks reading. (A one week responsibility)
- The question(s) for discussion should be open-ended and may include different types of questions such as interpretive (i.e., that ask for interpretations of the reading) or evaluative (i.e., that ask for positions, or opinions about the reading).

2. Response Papers: 30 points (15 points for November 5 and 15 points for December 3). Due on November 5 and December 3

Students will write 2 response papers throughout the semester. The response papers will be due the second and fourth weeks. The response papers should demonstrate your understanding of the week’s assigned readings. The response papers are worth 30 percent of your final grade. The response paper will be graded based on:

• How clearly and concisely you demonstrate your understanding of the readings
• Critical evaluation of the material
• These response papers should not be simply a summary of the readings but should push you to think about its implications. What do you agree with or disagree with regarding the readings?
• These papers should include at least one paragraph that articulates two ways in which the reading expanded your understanding of the issue the reading covered.
• These papers should include at least one paragraph that describes the implications of what you have learned for social work practice, policy or research.
• These papers should include at least one paragraph that examines how the issue covered might particularly impact disadvantaged groups.
• The response papers should each be 2-3 pages, 12 point font, double-spaced.
• If you are dissatisfied with the grade you earned for the first response paper you can choose to write a third response paper to replace one earlier paper. The replacement response paper needs to be turned in December 10th
You will probably be frustrated by having to keep these papers brief. But that is an important skill to learn. An important part of writing is to know what you want to say. Often, this will take more than a single draft to figure out. Though you will be tempted to start the night before the paper is due that is not sufficient time to write an excellent paper.

**Social Problem Description:** 15 points

*Description of assignment:* In this assignment, the student will begin to critically examine a social problem that impacts social workers and the clients they serve. (For the policy analysis paper you will analyze a policy that addresses this social problem.)

*Requirements of the assignment:*

- Identify a social issue or problem.
- Determine which groups are impacted by the social problem, and briefly explain how they are impacted.
- Describe attempts, strategies, and policies to address or solve the issue or problem.
- Briefly explain why social workers should care about this issue.
- At the end of this assignment, the student should identify a policy to focus on in the next assignment, the Social Policy Analysis Paper. **The policy selected needs to have been implemented.**
- The paper should be approximately three to four pages in length, double spaced.
- Students should use APA format and site sources where appropriate.
- Paper should include an introduction and conclusion.
- 3 sources are required (may use more)

**Social Welfare Social Policy Analysis Paper:** 25 points

*Description of assignment:* Students will select a federal or state social welfare policy or program to analyze that has been implemented. Students should pick a policy that is of interest to them that addresses the social problem in their previous paper. The assignment should be considered an opportunity to become an expert in a specific state or federal social welfare policy or program.

*Questions to answer:*

1. What are the needs and goals to be met through the program?
2. What is the form the benefit that the policy/program produces?
3. Who is eligible for the program? / Who does the program reach?
4. Analyze the implementation of that policy, and how values, ethics and political ideology affect the policy’s implementation. For example, how is eligibility for services established and how are benefits determined?
5. How is the program financed, what is the level of administration?
6. Discussion from a social justice perspective.
7. Paper should be approximately six pages in length, double spaced (not including title page, tables, figures, and references).
8. One of the sources used could be a piece of policy advocacy (a public testimony presented to a legislative committee, an informational sheet to a legislator, or amicus brief).
9. Include an introduction and conclusion.
10. Students should use APA format and site sources where appropriate.
11. 4 sources are required (may use more).

- Final paper due December 10th

VII. Course Policies

Attendance
Due to the accelerated nature of courses in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Part-Time MSW Program, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time.

Promptness
- Prompt arrival is required.
- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, arrive on time, and stay for the full session.
- Excused absences are limited to documentable illness, personal or family emergency or religious observation required during class hours.
- A pattern of later arrivals and/or early departures will translate into an absence. Whether excused or not, letting me know in advance when you’ll miss some or all of a class session is a basic professional courtesy.

Absence
To ensure a quality educational experience, students must attend and participate in classes.
- Attendance will be taken at each class
- Excused & Unexcused Absences:
  ~ The first unexcused absence will result in a student’s grade being dropped 3 points (on a scale of 100).
  ~ The second unexcused absence a student’s grade will drop a full grade.
  ~ On a case by case basis, it is left to the instructor’s discretion as to what is defined as an excused absence as well as to determine appropriate follow up plans
- Additional graded make-up work appropriate for the content missed may be assigned for excused and unexcused absences.
- 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 should contact the instructor prior to the start of class to be considered for an excused absence.
- Inclement Weather Policy
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. In the event that a class session is cancelled due to weather I will send an email with the powerpoint and instructions on how to engage with the class material.

If classes are not cancelled but an individual student concludes he/she cannot safely travel to reach his/her class site, the student must contact his/her instructor(s) regarding his/her plan to not travel. This absence will be considered excused and makeup work may be assigned.

If a class is cancelled you should check for an email from me.

Student Behavior Policy
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 fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of personal or professional nature discussed in class.

Technology Policy
In order to maintain an academic environment, cell phones and other electronic devices should be switched off and students must refrain from texting during class time.

Support for students needing ADA accommodation.
Students with Disabilities: If you require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class or to any assignments that I may give, please contact me as soon as possible. I want all my students to have an excellent learning experience.