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

II. Course Overview
This course covers U.S. social welfare policy. While income support policy is emphasized, other topics such as health care, child welfare, and anti-discrimination policies are also covered, and students are exposed to other areas of social policy through assigned projects. The course is required for MSW students and is a professional foundation course. It is also open to interested graduate students from other departments. No previous course work is required.

III. Course Competencies & Practice Behaviors & Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies Addressed in Course</th>
<th>Practice Behaviors Addressed in Course</th>
<th>Assignment(s) Measuring Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</td>
<td>1. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.</td>
<td>1. In-class ethics discussion (graded through participation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</td>
<td>1. Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom.</td>
<td>1. Critical Reflection Assignments 1, 2 &amp; 3. Social Policy Analysis Paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation.</td>
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<td>3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues.</td>
<td>3. Brief Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice.</td>
<td>1. Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.</td>
<td>1. Social Problem Description 1. Social Policy Analysis Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice.</td>
<td>1. Understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;</td>
<td>1. Social Problem Description 1, 2 &amp; 3. Policy Advocacy Assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. Course Content

Topics and readings may change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Week 1a**<br>10/29/16 | **Introduction**<br>Goals: In this session, we will become familiar with each other and the objectives of the course, and review various definitions of policy, social policy, and social welfare policy. We will consider several aspects of social policy that generate debate. We will also discuss the importance of social workers’ attention to, critical thinking about, and advocacy for social policy, and strategies for staying informed about policy developments relevant to the social work profession.  

- Review of syllabus, assignments and expectations.
- What is policy? What is social policy? What is social welfare policy?
- What are inherent tensions in social policies that contribute to debates about their merit?
- Why should social workers care about social policy?
- Which social policies should we care about? How do we stay informed?  

No Readings. |
| **Week 1b**<br>10/29/16 | **Social Justice Framework for Policy Analysis**<br>Goals: What is social justice? Are there different definitions that make a difference in analysis? How do we know if a social policy is fair or socially just? How do we know if a policy is effective or efficient? We will apply a social justice framework to a policy and consider who “wins” and who “loses” (effectiveness), and we will review various strategies for evaluating whether a policy works as intended (efficiency).  

- What do we mean by “social justice”? Are there different social justices?  
- Application of social justice framework in policy practice.  
- Identification and consideration of costs and benefits of social policy.  
- Power and powerlessness in the policy process.  
- Factors influencing social policies.  

**Required Readings:** <br>Barusch, Chapter 1, Social Justice and Social Workers. |
| Week 2a 11/05/16 | Theory and Politics in Social Policy  
**Goals:** How are policies created? We will briefly review the federal and state policy-making process, and discuss the role of politics in policy formation.  
We will also learn about policy analysis and how to identify the values, theories, and assumptions of underlying policies, and consider how various factors, including societal perceptions and values, affect the policy development process. The funding of social policies will be presented, along with the implications of different funding and organizational structures on policy delivery.  
- Brief review of policy-making process.  
- What should a social worker know about the federal and state structures and mechanisms for funding of social welfare?  
- How are social benefits distributed in the U.S.?  
- Models for policy analysis.  

**Required Readings:**  
Barusch, Chapter 2, The Government’s Role  
Dinitto, Chapter 2, p.39-43  
Scan: Barusch, Chapter 3, Policy Analysis and Policy Practice, pp. 61-73 (Conduct an Effective Policy Analysis)  
Review the following websites:  
www.democrats.org  
www.gop.com  
www.gp.org  
www.lp.org  

**Recommended Reading:**  
Wisconsin State Legislature. Available at http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ |
| Week 2b 11/05/16 | The Social Security Act, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)  
**Goals:** We will review the structure and content of the Social Security Act of 1935, and its current structure and content. We will also review the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (also known as “Obamacare”). A strategy will be introduced for keeping track of major social programs and their key characteristics.  
- Which social welfare policies are relevant to social work?  
- Review the organization of the Social Security Act and identify sections that “house” several major social programs.  
- Become familiar with elements of the PPACA (Obamacare)  

**Required Readings:**  
Barusch, Chapter 4, The Social Security Act.  
| Week 3a 11/12/16 | **Collective Responses to Poverty, Part I**  
**Goals:** Recent historical trends in poverty in different U.S. sub-populations and cross-nationally will be reviewed, and the implications of different strategies for measuring poverty will be considered. We will begin identifying different causal theories and values associated with poverty.  
- What are the social functions of poverty? Why does poverty exist?  
- Why is poverty a social problem as well as an economic problem?  
- What are the collective or societal responses to poverty?  

**Required Readings:**  
Barusch, Chap. 5, Poverty.  
|---|---|
| Week 3b 11/12/16 | **Collective Responses to Poverty, Part II**  
**Goals:** We will review the basic elements of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and its Wisconsin version, W2 (Wisconsin Works), consider whether the 1996 welfare reform legislation has been effective in achieving its intended outcomes. We will also discuss unintended implementation and outcome issues related to the legislation. Other government responses to poverty, such as SNAP, EITC, and Section 8 will be examined as well.  
- Welfare Reform: has it worked? Has it worked in Wisconsin?  
- How are these policies experienced by their intended beneficiaries?  

**Required Readings:**  
| Week 4a 11/19/16 | **Social Work Advocacy in the Policy-Making Process**  
**Goals:** In this class, we will consider the role of power in agenda setting and policy advocacy, and the various individual and institutional players in these processes. We will also learn ethical strategies for effecting (or preventing) policy change, with particular attention to the social worker perspective.  
- Policy advocacy strategies  
- The role of social workers in policy advocacy.  
- Is there an ethical dimension to policy practice?  

**Required Readings:**  
Barusch, Chapter 3, pp. 73-89. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4b</th>
<th>Collective Responses to Health Care Coverage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/19/16</td>
<td><strong>Goals:</strong> We will review the origins of the federal government’s role in providing health care coverage, and identify the pressing health care needs of certain sub-populations. We will analyze the debate over universal health care coverage from a social justice perspective and through cross-national comparisons of health care coverage. We will also discuss the implications of tying health insurance to employment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Overview of the structure of the U.S. health care system and the social values that sustain it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Current policy issues related to the Affordable Care Act</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The current status of health care reform legislation.</td>
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<td><strong>Required Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dolgoff, Chapter 10, p. 221-241</td>
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<td>Kaiser Family Foundation, Summary of the Affordable Care Act.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5a</th>
<th>Social Policy and Racial and Ethnic Minorities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/03/16</td>
<td><strong>Goals:</strong> In this class, we will consider culture, race, ethnicity, and immigration status vis-à-vis social policy in the U.S. In what ways do social policies recognize these differences, or not recognize them? How does minority group status affect one’s influence on social policy development? What are the implications of discrimination, marginalization, and oppression based on minority group status for specific subgroups and for the larger society?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Population trends in immigration and demographic composition</td>
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<td>• Culture clashes in U.S. social policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Costs and benefits of “race-based” social policies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The line between recognition and exploitation of culture in social policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barusch, Chapter 9, People of Color.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Listen or read:</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5b</th>
<th>Social Policy and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/03/16</td>
<td><strong>Goals:</strong> We will analyze the recent Supreme Court rulings as well as “Defense of Marriage” legislative proposals and enactments, using the social justice framework. We will also consider other examples of social policy that affect the freedoms and choices of LGBT individuals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Defining a family; defining a marriage—implications for social inclusion.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The role of values and beliefs in the social policy process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barusch, Chapter 10, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 6a | 12/10/16 | **Collective Responses to Mental Illness**  
Goals: Mental health policy and service systems have changed dramatically since the passage of the Social Security Act. We will discuss the implications of the deinstitutionalization movement in mental health care for those with serious and persistent mental illness, and the role of federal funding in this movement. We will also discuss the current status of funding and service delivery in mental health care, and how social stigma around mental illness has a role in shaping mental health policy. Finally, we will discuss the movement for mental health parity in insurance coverage.  
- Historical overview of mental health care funding, access, and delivery  
- The line between empowerment and abandonment in mental health policy  
- The role of “stigma” in social policy  

*Required Readings:*  
Barusch, Chapter 7, Mental Illness.  
| Week 6b | 12/10/15 | **Social Policy and Children**  
Goals: In this class session, we will discuss recent policy changes in the child welfare and education fields, the values underlying these policies, and unintended outcomes associated with their implementation. We will also discuss the movement towards “standards-based” reforms in child welfare and education policy.  
- Current issues in child welfare and education policy  
- Issues with legislating accountability in social policy  

*Required Readings:*  
Barusch, Chapter 11, Children.  
| Week 7a | 12/17/16 | **Policy Regarding Women: Family Support and Family Planning Policy**  
Goals: In this class session, we consider different policy models for supporting parents and families in caring for their children. We will also discuss current federal policy initiatives on marriage promotion. We will wrap up the course with an overview of future directions in social policy of relevance to the social work profession.  
- Cross-national comparisons of family leave, childcare, and child tax credit policies.  
- Marriage-promotion initiatives.  

*Required Readings:*  
Barusch, Chapter 12, Women. |
Week 7b  
12/17/16

Social Policy regarding Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities

**Goals:** We will consider how definitions of aging 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 alone can ensure adequate access to health care services for either older adults or people with disabilities.

- Controversies in defining “aging” and “disability”
- Social factors affecting morbidity and mortality rates among the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

**Required Readings:**
Barusch, Chapter 8, Disability.
Barusch, Chapter 13, The Elderly.

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**V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course**

There is one textbook required for this course:


Students are encouraged to make use of online resources, especially

- [www.tcf.org](http://www.tcf.org) The website of The Century Foundation;
- [www.sosec.org](http://www.sosec.org) The website of the Social Security Network, a project of The Century Foundation;
- [www.wispolitics.com](http://www.wispolitics.com) on issues in Wisconsin
- [Cbpp.org](http://Cbpp.org) The website of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

**For advocacy:**
Addresses and e-mail of members of Congress: [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)
OR: Senate: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
House: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- **Advocacy in Wisconsin:** The Wisconsin Association of Community Action Programs: [http://www.wiscap.org/](http://www.wiscap.org/)
- **Regarding state policy:** [www.statepolicy.org](http://www.statepolicy.org)

**VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods**
The format for this class combines interactive lectures, large and small group discussions, and presentations from guest speakers.

**Grading**
Grades for each assignment will be earned on a 100-point scale as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>Outstanding; surpasses expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>Surpasses expectations in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>Meets minimum expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>Meets expectations in some areas; falls below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>Falls below expectations in most areas, not acceptable graduate work</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>
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</tbody>
</table>

Some comments on grading:
Class attendance and participation are expected in this course. If a student must miss a class, it is the student’s responsibility to secure materials, handouts, and class notes from one of her or his classmates.

A student may appeal a grade, but must do so in writing, being sure to support his/her/their 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.

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 Association*.

### Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>Throughout semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection Assignments</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>Thursday of weeks 2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Policy Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Part One: Social Problem Description</em></td>
<td>25 points</td>
<td>November 12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Part Two: Social Welfare Policy Analysis Paper</em></td>
<td>35 points</td>
<td>December 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional: Turn in draft</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>December 3rd</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Part Three: Policy Advocacy Critique</em></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>December 17th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Part Four: Brief Presentation</em></td>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>December 17th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
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### Assignment Instructions:

**Participation:** 10 points

Attendance and prompt arrival are expected. Please participate by making thoughtful comments and asking questions. Active participation in all class exercises is also a course requirement.

**Critical Reflection Assignments:** 15 points total; 3 points per assignment *(Due midnight Thursday of weeks 2-6)*

*Description of assignment:* The student will critically reflect on the readings, submit a short reflection, and include a discussion question.

*Requirements of assignment:*
- Students will submit a paragraph each week explaining information from the readings that they learned, made them think differently, or raised questions.
- Students will also submit a discussion question. The question should be open ended, prompt deep answers (more than recalling facts), and be relevant to other students.
Social Welfare Policy Project (Part One- Part Four)

Part One: Social Problem Description. 25 points (Due: November 12th)
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.

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 1) identify a policy to focus on in the next assignment, the Social Policy Analysis Paper and 2) list four questions in regards to the policy.

Other requirements:
- The paper should be approximately three to five 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)

35 points (Due December 10; Optional: Draft December 3rd)
Description of assignment: Students will select a federal or state social welfare policy or program to analyze. Students should pick a policy that is of interest to them. The assignment should be considered an opportunity to become an expert in a specific state or federal social welfare policy or program.

**During class on November 12th, students will meet individually with instructor to discuss which social policy he/she/they selected and determine the policy framework the student will use to analyze the policy. The questions included in the Social Problem Description will be incorporated. (ex: rational, implementation, etc.).

Other requirements:
- Paper should be approximately six to eight pages in length, double spaced (not including title page, tables, figures, and references).
- 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). The student could draw on this piece of advocacy in the next assignment, the Policy Advocacy Critique.
- Include an introduction and conclusion.
- Students should use APA format and site sources where appropriate.
- 5 sources are required (may use more)
10 points (Due December 17th)
Description of assignment: The student is required to find a piece of policy advocacy in his/her/their selected policy area. This piece of advocacy may be (a) a public testimony presented to a legislative committee, (b) an informational sheet for a legislator, or (c) amicus brief. The student should briefly critique the piece of policy advocacy through a short paper.

Requirements of the assignment:
- Introduce the piece of advocacy and its intent.
- Explain what the piece does well and what could be better.
  - How are logos, pathos, and ethos incorporated?
  - What is your view of the argument used in the piece?
  - How, if at all, were opposing viewpoints addressed?
Other Requirements:
- Critique should be approximately one to two pages in length, double spaced.

Part Four: Brief Presentation on Social Welfare Policy or Program.
5 points (Due December 17th)
Description of the assignment: Through this assignment, students will showcase to the class what they have learned through this assignment.

Requirements of assignment:
- Presentation should be five minutes or less in length. Time will be kept and students will be required to end at exactly 5 minutes.
- Requirements of the presentation are vague to prompt creativity from the student. Engaging the class by asking questions, showing short video or audio clips, and conducting brief activities are all encouraged.

VII. Course Policies

Attendance Policy
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 to all courses is required.
- Instructors may take actions they deem appropriate if a student is consistently tardy.
- Instructors may also consider a significantly late arrival or early departure as an absence.

Absence
To ensure a quality educational experience, students must attend and participate in classes.
- Attendance will be taken at each class and students’ level of participation noted.
- Excused and unexcused absences:
  - The first unexcused absence will result in a student’s grade being dropped one full grade.
  - The second unexcused absence 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 as well as to determine appropriate follow up plans.
- Additional graded make-up work appropriate for the content missed will 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.
- Students should check their email for a message from the instructor, indicating what to do to engage in the material for that missed class.
- 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 not to travel. This absence will be considered excused and makeup work will be assigned.

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 a personal or professional nature discussed in class.

Disability Accommodations
If you require accommodations to obtain equal access to this class or to any assignments that the instructor may give, please contact me as soon as possible. The instructor wants all students to have an excellent learning experience.

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