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.

Course designations and attributes: (S-I) Counts as Liberal Arts and Sciences credit in L&S.
Instructional mode: All Face-to-Face
Requisites: Jr. Standing
Credit hour statement: 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 (Thursdays, 10:00-12:00), community learning, and other course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, 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 processes¹ 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: September 6: Overview of the course
- expectations
- syllabus
- structure of class
- assignments
- community learning
  - What does this mean?
  - How does a student learner do this?
  - How to make use of resources in developing a relationship with a community partner?
  - How to enter into a community as a student learner?

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

In class discussion exercises and activities:
- Who we are? Why this matters?
- What is community learning?

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).
- Searching for a community learning site.

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

**Readings:**

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

**Readings:**

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

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

**Readings:**


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

**Community Learning: Memorandum of Understanding DUE to TA by 9/27**

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

**Readings:**


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: October 11: Employment and poverty: What are the issues?**

- the working poor
- the nature of low-wage work

**Readings:**


Assignment 1 due – Canvas submission by 10:00 a.m. on October 11 (Week 6).

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: October 18: 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: October 25: Theories of poverty: how place and space matter

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

Readings:


- 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: November 1: Immigration, work and poverty

- recent immigration trends in the United States
- immigrants and low-wage work
- health, housing and citizenship status
- race and immigration, the U.S. and European Union

Readings:


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

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

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

Readings:


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 by 10:00 a.m. on November 8 (Week 10).

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

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

Readings:


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

Class Roundtable Discussion Preparation Guidelines for Students will be handed out in class to prepare for December 6th exercise.

RECESS: NOVEMBER 22 – NOVEMBER 25

Week 12: November 29: 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: December 6: Class Roundtable Discussion: Community Placement and Policy**

- In-class exercise
- Course Evaluation

**Community Learning: Timesheet due to TA by 12/6.**

Assignment 3 due on December 13th – Canvas submission no later than 5:00 p.m. Late papers will not be accepted.

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 on or before September 27th (Week 4).
  - Complete the “Community Learning Student Timesheet” signed by student and agency contact, hand in to TA on or before December 6th.
- 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 paper assignments
• Complete written in-class exercises based on readings

Assignments: There will be three written graded paper assignments

The course’s three papers are designed in a sequence through which students will:

• Develop understanding of the goals, function and context of their community learning agencies,
• Build expertise in defining and describing a poverty-related problem and its significance
• Gain skill in identifying and evaluating evidence about the effects of programmatic and policy solutions to poverty-related problems
• Evidence this skill development through each paper

The assignments build on each other. This allows the student to revise prior work by increasing the analysis, clarity and quality of the written work. Each assignment is structured to invite increased understanding of the problem evidenced by the integration of various sources of knowledge (government reports, social science literature, evaluation reports, agency data).

Format all assignments 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. 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.

All assignments must be submitted on Canvas in the appropriate drop box by the date and time listed in the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Paper 1: Overview of Your Placement Agency (20 points, 5 pages)**

a) Describe your placement organization and its mission, what specific poverty-related problem your organization intends to solve, and why this problem matters to the local area in which your agency functions. (8 points)

b) Explain how the organization goes about attempting to address this poverty-related problem (mechanics of the intervention—who is eligible, who is served, how, etc.). (6 points)

c) How does the organization determine whether it is succeeding in addressing this problem? What evidence do they provide that their work is successful? (6 points)

d) Use a minimum of 3 high quality secondary sources as your references.

**Paper 2: Problem Statement (20 points, 3 pages)**
a) Define and describe your specific poverty-related problem of interest formally, with precision and care. (8 points)

b) Describe the scope and nature of the problem. This includes documenting the incidence/prevalence of the problem at the national level and local level, the extent to which it varies between/among key demographic groups, and any significant trends over time. (8 points)

Tip: Formal writing is structured to convince readers your poverty-related problem is real, significant, and that it needs to be addressed. This is accomplished by developing a cogent, logical argument which is supported by high quality evidence.

c) Explain the link between the poverty-related problem you have described and the work of your placement agency. How, specifically, does your agency work to address this problem? Here you may wish to draw from your first paper. (4 points)

d) Use a minimum of 5 external references (additional to those used for Paper 1).

**Paper 3: Program and Policy Responses to Poverty-Related Problems (30 points, 6-8 pages)**

a) As an introduction, review your problem statement and the intervention used by your placement agency to address the problem you are focused on. You may draw from papers 1 & 2 for this portion. (5 points)

b) Is the intervention your agency is using rooted in evidence? What research exists to suggest that this intervention might be successful or unsuccessful? Given the research, what might the agency change to better conform to what evidence suggests is effective? (10 points)

c) Summarize/describe what policy is in place to address this problem. Evaluate/provide evidence about the effectiveness of existing policy interventions. In what ways is existing policy effective or not effective? (10 points)

d) Conclude with an overall summary about your placement agency’s work in the context of the existing policy environment and research on interventions in this area. What are your summary conclusions on this poverty-related problem and how it should be addressed by agencies like yours, or in the policy-arena? (5 points)

e) Use a minimum of 5 external references (additional to those used for Papers 1 & 2)

**Written Exercises Completed in class Based on Readings (15 points)**

Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 will include an in-class written group exercise based on the readings and, often, integration with in-class content covered in the PowerPoint lecture material. Completion of the exercise and engagement with the group process is expected. The exercises will be posted on Canvas after class and can be completed by a student who has an excused absence. The completed exercise should be scanned and forwarded to the TA within 1 week of the missed class for credit. Guidelines for these exercises will be presented in class.
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).

**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.

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

The student agrees to:
- Serve 25 hours over the Fall 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

**Final grades will be calculated as follows:**
Paper 1: Overview of your community agency 20
Paper 2: Problem statement 20
Paper 3: Program and policy responses to poverty-related problems 30
Completed in class exercise questions based on assigned readings 15
Community Learning Completion 10
Attendance and participation in class activities 5

Grading

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

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

Attendance and Participation in Lecture and Class Exercises

Class will include group exercises designed to deepen and integrate community learning with classroom work. 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**

McBurney Connect is the online accommodation and case management system that serves as a hub for accommodation information for students with disabilities. Students must garner McBurney approval before accommodations can be extended. Supply McBurney approval within the first two weeks of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized, so that 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)
- “Avoiding Plagiarism” from The Writing Center: [http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html)

There are two major forms which plagiarism takes:

1. The use of *direct quotes* from others’ written or spoken work and presenting them as one’s own words without using proper quotation marks or offsetting.
   
   **Direct Quote**: To repeat verbatim or to copy verbatim the words of another.

2. The other major form of plagiarism where a student (or someone else) *paraphrases* the ideas or research findings of another person(s), but fails to identify the source of the ideas. A *paraphrase* is a restatement of a text or passage in another form or other words (i.e., putting into your own words the ideas of another person).
Code of Ethics, Student Rights and Responsibilities & Plagiarism
BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as well as adhere to the Plagiarism Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.

Appendix A

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<tr>
<th>Competency and Description</th>
<th>Course Content Relevant to Dimensions that Comprise the Competency *</th>
<th>Location in Syllabus</th>
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<td>5. Engage in Policy Practice</td>
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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.

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<tr>
<td>Written in-class group exercises based on readings</td>
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9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness.

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