

COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW8334 (11166) Social Welfare Policy Analysis

TIME: Tuesdays, 1:00-4:00

FACULTY: Samira Ali, PhD, LMSW

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 and
by appointment

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Phone: 713/743-1491

The professor reserves the right to alter readings, course topics, and assignments as needed during the course of the semester to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints.

I. Course

A. Catalog Description

Examines issues and problems in social welfare policy, and the skills and training needed to formulate a policy hypothesis and disseminate the results of an empirical policy study.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this course is to critically examine the nature of American social policy, particularly in relation to social work research and practice. The course will examine problem identification in policy, as well as the underlying value tensions and debates that shape social welfare policy in the U.S. Substantial attention will be paid to considerations of how policy impacts research and practice, as well as how research can be designed and disseminated in order to impact policy. Students will critically analyze frameworks and methods of policy analysis and will examine how these methods are utilized in peer-reviewed policy analysis literature.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the historical, philosophical, political, cultural and economic principles and ideologies that underlie social welfare policy development and implementation;
2. Evaluate diverse policy analysis frameworks and methods, and demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate analytical criteria in analyzing social policies.
3. Demonstrate an appreciation and commitment to the ethical principles and obligations that preserve a linkage between social work practice, social work research, and social policy;
4. Critically assess the concept of evidence-based policy, and examine ways in which social work researchers can aim to influence policy discussions and deliberations; and
5. Identify concrete and meaningful implications for policy based on a body of research literature.

III. Course Structure

The class format will primarily be a seminar-style class. Discussions and interactive lectures are the primary formats, with students expected to be active participants. In-class exercises and peer presentations will play a role in classroom instruction. Students are expected to complete all readings as assigned, as they are a major source of learning in this course.

IV. Textbooks

Readings are required as noted in the syllabus, and as assigned during the course of the semester. Required articles and book chapters are available on Blackboard or will be distributed to students by the professor. They are to be read in preparation for the class for which they are assigned.

The following books are required:

Blau, J., & Abramovitz, M. (2010). *The dynamics of social welfare policy*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Harvey, D. (2007). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Students are also encouraged to read at least one daily newspaper, preferably reflecting diverse political viewpoints. The following are suggested: The Houston Chronicle, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal. International sources, such as BBC News, are also encouraged.

Please note that assigned readings have been purposefully selected to strengthen students' skills and critical thinking regarding social welfare policy analysis, as well as to encourage healthy classroom debate; it is not expected that students (or the professor) will agree with all perspectives presented.

V. Course Requirements (Tentative)

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

Assignment	Points
Active Class Participation	10 points
Current Policy in the News Discussion	10 points
Current Policy Oral Discussion	30 points
Policy Analysis Paper	50 points (10 for proposal; 40 for paper)

Assignment details are provided at the end of this syllabus. All assignments are due by the dates specified above. **All assignments due on class meeting days are due before the start of the class session that day.** Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval. However **the grade value will be reduced by 10 points for each day late**, including turning in an assignment after the time deadline on the day it is due. The professor reserves the right to require any student to consult the Writing Center regarding assignments in this course.

VI. Evaluation and Grading

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the college.

A =	96-100% of the points	C+ =	76-79.9%
A- =	92-95.9%	C =	72-75.9%
B+=	88-91.9%	C- =	68-71.9%
B =	84-87.9%	D =	64-67.9%
B- =	80-83.9%	F =	Below 64%

VII. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

VIII. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All presentations, papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your

own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. It also includes securing another person to complete any required activities, assignments, quizzes, papers, or exams in an online course, or in any on-line environment. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see the instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

IX. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

See attached documents

X. Bibliography-optional

Lists current references for students who are interested in pursuing additional information on course content.

XI. Americans with Disabilities Statement

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

XII. Addenda

Class Culture - While I will lecture briefly during every session, a bulk of the learning will happen through class discussion and group exercises. Thus, the class preparation through reading and class participation really play an important role. I hope the organization of this class will encourage it to be a safe atmosphere where ideas are exchanged and differing perspectives are respected. I am hoping that the combination of a highly motivated group of students will help to make this class not only intellectually stimulating, but also a pleasant place to be. I ask that participants be courteous and respectful to others. In other words, I would like to stimulate intellectual exchange and the ability to discuss and disagree with one another and to understand that we can do this in a friendly, civilized, and respectful manner.

Attendance

It is expected that everyone will attend class and show up on time. There will be a sign in sheet to keep a record of class attendance, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you have signed in. Attendance is part of your grade. If you are unable to attend class, please notify the instructor via email as soon as you can. It is expected that everyone will check their UH email accounts and UH blackboard regularly for course updates, new materials, and announcements.

Electronics

You are expected to conduct yourself as a professional in this class. Distractions should

be kept to a minimum; cell phones should be turned off before class; no laptops should be utilized during class sessions, except as permitted by the professor.

Blackboard

The course information and readings are posted on this course's Blackboard site. Please use Blackboard to submit assignments and follow course announcements. Students are encouraged to post and discuss links or articles relevant to course content in order to strengthen the course learning environment.

Consultation. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 of this syllabus. Other times may be arranged by appointment – please contact me by email (sbali3@central.uh.edu) to schedule alternative appointment times. I encourage students to meet with me to discuss assignment topics, questions related to course content, or other topics that arise as a result of course content, assignments, and discussions

Additional resources

Supportive Websites: Research centers Urban Institute: www.urban.org RAND Corporation: www.rand.org New America Foundation: <http://www.newamerica.net/> Mathematica: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/HOME.HTM> MDRC: <http://www.mdrc.org/> North Carolina Progress Board: <http://www.ncprogress.org/> North Carolina Justice Center: <http://www.ncjustice.org/> John Locke Foundation: <http://www.johnlocke.org/>

Government documents and data Federal bills and laws: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php> Supreme Court opinions: <http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html> U.S. Census data: <http://www.census.gov>

Course Assignments

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

1) Active Class Participation – 10 points.

As a seminar class, active class participation is expected from every student, and is necessary for optimal student learning. We learn from each other; thus, students are expected to come prepared to discuss the weekly readings, as well as broader themes and/or current policy issues and events that arise around each session's topic. Debate and discussion of different perspectives is expected; however, students are expected to demonstrate respectful conduct towards one another.

Your participation will be assessed using the following criteria:

- supporting flow of discussion (sharing appropriate and relevant content, reading and integrating weekly readings, and furthering classroom discussion of session topics);
- active and respectful listening;
- providing constructive feedback on draft policy analysis papers and proposals to your classmates; and
- being respectful in comments and action (including regular attendance and arriving on time).

2) Current Policy in the News Discussion – 10 points

Each student will select two class session over the course of the semester to bring in newspaper or newsmagazine articles or *brief* video clips about a social policy or policy issue that has been in the news recently. Each student is responsible for:

- a) clearly presenting the issue,
- b) the role of neoliberalism in the context of the social policy or policy issue.
- c) explaining its potential impact for social work research and on professional social work practice, and
- d) facilitating class discussion of links between the policy issue in the article/clip and course content and readings.
- e)

Each presenter is responsible for keeping the presentation and discussion to approximately 20 minutes in length. Discussion will be cut off at 30 minutes.

(DUE: Session selected during Session 1)

3) Current Policy Oral Presentation – 30 points.

Each student will select one of the following major U.S. social welfare policies as the topic of an oral classroom presentation:

- 1) Public Assistance Policies to be selected from this list:
 - a. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,

- b. Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (TANF), or
 - c. Supplemental Security Income
- 2) Medicare
 - 3) Social Security
 - 4) Earned Income Tax Credit
 - 5) Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Policies will be selected during Session 3 – each policy may only be presented on by one student.

The presentation should be presented as if you are an instructor teaching a social work class about this policy. Your job is to educate the class about the policy and provoke critical analysis about the policy. You may use any presentation format that you believe would be effective in a classroom teaching setting. Your presentation (including class discussion) should be limited to 45 minutes. Presentations should include the following:

- a) a description of the social problem the policy was designed to address, in the views of its creators (and amenders, as relevant),
- b) an unbiased description of the policy and presentation of key elements,
- c) presentation of modern philosophical, political, and economic debates surrounding the policy, and value conflicts underlying these debates,
- d) stimulation of a discussion about the future trajectory of the policy and potential impacts on social work practice and on vulnerable populations, and responses to questions about the policy from your fellow students, and
- e) distribution of a brief bibliography of useful resources on the policy, including empirical analyses and resources from reputable think tanks or policy research institutes.

(DUE: 10/6-10/20, as determined during Session 1)

4) Policy Analysis Paper – 45 points total (10 for proposal, 35 for paper).

Students are responsible for writing an approximately 15 page in-depth social welfare policy analysis on a policy issue of interest and relevant to your own research area of interest. Your goal should be to develop a paper of publishable quality. *Therefore, paper length may vary as specified in the author guidelines of a target journal of your choice.*

This paper may take several forms to be selected by the student in conjunction with the instructor, including, but not limited to: an analysis of a specific policy; a comparative analysis of multiple policies (e.g., across states or countries); or an analysis of specific policy implications stemming from a specific body of empirical research.

You are expected to conduct library research, and to examine research literature and data (e.g., prior empirical studies that have been conducted, secondary data analysis, formal program evaluations, social indicators) to inform your analysis. You may use primary sources of data, as time permits; however, if you do seek to submit your paper for publication consideration, you must ensure your data adheres to all relevant university human subject requirements. Specific details of the assignment will be handed out in the beginning of the

session.

This assignment will be completed in three parts:

- 1) **Proposal:** The proposal should consist of a preliminary draft outline of your paper, and a brief (approximately 500 words, plus references) written discussion of your chosen topic similar in length and style to what you might submit as a conference proposal. The following points should be addressed:
- a) the specific policy or set of policies to be used in your analysis
 - b) the framework(s)/criteria to be applied
 - c) an initial review of relevant literature
 - d) any additional sources of data to be used in your analysis

(DUE: TUESDAY, 9/20; Copies must be brought for the professor and all students in the course)

- 2) **Draft:** You are expected to present a solid draft of your paper to your classmates and the professor, and to read and provide feedback on the paper drafts provided to you by your fellow students. During in-class sessions, the class will be expected to provide constructive feedback to strengthen each student's policy analysis.

(DUE: THE WEEK BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED DISCUSSION DATE; Copies must be brought or e-mailed to the professor and all students in the course the week prior to your discussion date)

- 3) **Final Paper:** Based on the feedback provided during the in-class sessions, you are expected to revise your paper, in order to strengthen it as much as possible. This revised policy analysis will be submitted to the professor for evaluation.
(to be discussed)

Your draft and final paper are expected to follow the guidelines of the 6th edition of the APA Publication Manual. They are expected to be double-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1" margins, with page numbers indicated. Your final paper will be assessed based on: adherence to the required elements of the assignment; the quality of analysis and the depth of understanding of the topic; logical and well-organized presentation of arguments, and conclusions clearly drawn from your arguments. In addition, your analysis must be supported with reputable sources, and must be appropriately cited. Appropriate grammar and spelling are expected

Week Number/Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1 August 23	Course Overview Identifying Social Problems & Defining Social Policy Defining Social Policy	Blau & Abramovitz Chapter 1 & 2
Week 2 August 30	Historical Trends– Economy and Social Welfare Introducing Neoliberalism	Blau & Abramovitz Chapters 3; Chapter 4 (skim) Harvey – Introduction & Chapter 1
Week 3 September 6	Ideology Historical Trends Continued Neoliberalism	Blau & Abramovitz Chapters 5 & Chapter 7 Harvey – Chapter 2 Myles, J. & Quadagno, J. (2002). Political theories of the welfare state. <i>Social Service Review</i> , 76, 1, 34-57. – Skim
Week 4 September 13	Neoliberalism Summing it up	Harvey Chapter 3; Chapter 4 – skim Abramovitz, M. (2012). Theorising the neoliberal welfare state for social work. <i>The Sage Handbook of Social Work</i> , London, Sage.
Week 5 September 20	Linking Research & Policy Neoliberalism	Harvey Chapter 7 Bogenschneider, K. & Corbett, T. (2010). <i>Evidence- Based Policymaking: Insights from Policy-Minded Researchers and Research-Minded Policymakers</i> . New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. (Chapter 1: Exploring the disconnect between research & policy, pp. 1-24 and Table 5.2, p. 113 Ritter, A. & Bammer, G. (2010). Models of policy- making and their relevance for drug research. <i>Drug and Alcohol Review</i> , 29, 352-357.

<p>Week 6 September 27</p>	<p>Models of Policy Making</p>	<p>Ginsberg, L. & Miller-Cribbs, J. (2005). <i>Understanding Social Problems, Policies, and Programs</i>. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. (Chapter 8: Analyzing social policies and models for policy analysis, pp. 241- 286)</p> <p>Graves, S. (2013). Legislating victim offender dialogue: A value-rich policy analysis. <i>Victims and Offenders</i>, 8, 357- 372.</p> <p>Jani, N. (2010). Analyzing legal paradoxes in anti-trafficking policies. <i>Journal of Comparative Social Welfare</i>, 26, 1, 27-42.</p> <p>Scherrer, J. (2012). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as policy and strategy for social work action in child welfare in the United States. <i>Social Work</i>, 57, 1, 11-22.</p>
<p>Week 7– October 4</p>	<p>Defining Policy Problems</p>	<p>Stone, D. (2002). <i>Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making</i>, 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. (Chapter 6: Symbols, pp. 137-162)</p> <p>Nixon, K. (2011). Children’s exposure to intimate partner violence in Alberta, Canada: The construction of a policy problem. <i>Journal of Policy Practice</i>, 10, 268-287.</p> <p>Oakley, M.R. (2009). Agenda setting and state policy diffusion: The effects of media attention, state court decisions, and policy learning on fetal killing policy. <i>Social Science Quarterly</i>, 90, 1, 164-178.</p> <p>Suggested reading Burstein, P. & Britcher, M. (1997). Problem definition and public policy: Congressional committees confront</p>
<p>Week 8 October 11</p>	<p>Frameworks for Policy Analysis</p>	<p>Frameworks for policy analysis (from week 7 cont)</p> <p>Moye, J. & Rinker. (2002). It’s a hard knock life. <i>Harvard Journal on Legislation</i>, 39, 375-394.</p> <p>Riordan, C. & Aguilar, J.P. (2009). What’s missing from No Child Left Behind? A policy analysis from a social work perspective. <i>Children & Schools</i>, 31, 3, 135-144.</p> <p>Karger - Social Welfare Policy Research: A Framework for Policy Analysis</p> <p>Meyers, M., Glaser, B. & MacDonald, K. (1998). On the front lines of welfare delivery: Are workers implementing policy reforms? <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i>, 17, 1-22.</p> <p>Jaffe, P.G., Crooks, C.V., & Wolfe, D.A. (2003). Legal and policy responses to children exposed to domestic violence: The need to evaluate intended and unintended consequences. <i>Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review</i>, 6, 3, 205-213.</p>

Week 9 October 18	<i>Quantitative and qualitative methods for policy analysis</i>	<p>Yang, K. Quantitative methods for policy analysis. In F. Fischer, G. Miller, & M. Sidney, (Eds.). <i>Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics, and methods</i>. (pp. 349-367). New York: CRC Press.</p> <p>Yanow, D. (2007). Qualitative-interpretive methods in policy research. In F. Fischer, G. Miller, & M. Sidney, (Eds.). <i>Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics, and methods</i>. (pp. 405-415). New York: CRC Press.</p> <p>May, H. (2004). Making statistics more meaningful for policy research and program evaluation. <i>American Journal of Evaluation</i>, 25, 4, 525-540.</p> <p>Sadovnik, A. (2007). Qualitative research and public policy. In F. Fischer, G. Miller, & M. Sidney, (Eds.). <i>Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics, and methods</i>. (pp. 417-427). New York: CRC Press. – Skim</p>
Week 10 October 25	<p>Policy Analyses – Applying the Policy Model</p> <p>Income Support: Programs and Policies</p> <p>Jobs and Job training</p>	<p>Blau & Abramovitz Chapter 8 & Chapter 9</p> <p>Skim - Abramovitz, M. (2001). Everyone is still on welfare: The role of redistribution in social policy. <i>Social Work</i>, 46, 4, 297-308.</p>
Week 11 November 1	<p>Housing: Programs and Policies</p> <p>Food and Hunger</p>	Blau & Abramovitz Chapters 10 and 12
Week 12 November 8	Health Care: programs and Policies	Chapter 11 and Chapter 13 (Conclusion)
Week 13 November 15	Social Movements and Social Change Advocacy	Blau & Abramovitz Chapter 6
Week 14 November 22	<i>Disseminating policy research findings</i>	<p>Bogenschneider, K. & Corbett, T. (2010). <i>Evidence- Based Policymaking: Insights from Policy-Minded Researchers and Research-Minded Policymakers</i>. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. (Chapter 9: Communicating with policymakers, pp. 193- 226).</p> <p>Drake, E., Aos, S., & Miller, M. (2009). Evidence-based public policy options to reduce crime and criminal justice costs: Implications in Washington State. <i>Victims and Offenders</i>, 4, 170-196.</p>

		<p>Stanhope, V. & Dunn, K. (2011). The curious case of Housing First: The limits of evidence based policy. <i>International Journal of Law and Psychiatry</i>, 34, 275-282.</p> <p><u>Suggested readings</u></p> <p>Musso, et al. (2000). Tradecraft: Professional writing as problem solving. <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i>, 19, 4, 635-646.</p> <p>Jonson-Reid, M. (2011). Disentangling system contact and services: A key pathway to evidence-based children’s policy. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>, 33, 598- 604.</p> <p>Rote, S. & Quadagno, J. (2011). Depression and alcohol dependence among poor women: Before and after welfare reform. <i>Social Service Review</i>, 85, 2, 229-245.</p>
<p>Week 15 November 29</p>		<p>Policy Analysis Draft Presentations</p>