Brigham Young University  
Social Welfare Policy  
Pol Sci 545

Winter 2011  
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Office Hours:  
TTh 8:00-10:00 am  
MW 9:00-11:00  
Other times by appointment

Instructor: Mike Seipel, Ph.D.

Course Description:

This course is designed to prepare students to act as informed and competent ethical practitioners and decision makers in providing services, and as participants in efforts to achieve desirable changes in public policies and programs. This is the first in the sequence of three policy courses offered, (two other course are electives), and since the subsequent courses will examine mainly the special topics, the emphasis of this course will center around the building foundations for policy analysis and formulation. The orientation of this course is pragmatic, applied and interdisciplinary, and hence multiple methods of inquiry and arguments will be utilized to analyze policy problems. Students are expected to develop both socio-politico and metho-technological skills, including knowledge of current issues and policies, which affect our society. This course will pay a particular attention to how policies effect diverse and at-risk populations in the United States.

Course Objectives:

Knowledge

1. To recognize the relationship between public policy and the dimension of choice in service and practice methods.

2. To have knowledge and understanding of the impact of social welfare policies on the nation’s minorities and other more vulnerable populations (e.g. race, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental abilities).

3. To develop knowledge of our social welfare policies in the context of the systems theory to show how they are interdependent and influenced by various factors and forces in our multiple and complex society.

4. Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power.

5. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination

Skills

1. To develop multiple policy analysis models from which to analyze and formulate social welfare
policies.

2. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advances social well-being.

Values

1. To develop intellectual curiosity, honesty, and openness to understand the meanings, scopes, functions, and consequences of the American social welfare policies on its citizens—particularly our diverse population.

2. To enhance attitudes of altruism, fair play, respect, and democratic ideals to bring about desirable changes in our imperfect social order.

3. Develop ideals, values, ethics and attitudes that is compatible with social work values and ethical system, and make ethical decisions by applying standards of the NASW Code of Ethics.

Actions

1. Advocate for client access to the services of social work.

2. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

3. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.

4. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

5. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

6. Use evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence in advocacy for policies that advance social and economic well-being.

7. Advocate with and inform administrators and legislators to influence policies that impact clients and service.

Course Requirement:

Your participation in this course is evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Meaningful participation and regular attendance are mandatory for the superior students. Excessive absences, tardiness and non-participation will be considered as a lack of commitment to class and professional ethics, and will affect the student’s overall grades. A half grade will be deducted after two absences. All students are expected to observe proper classroom decorum. Disruptive behaviors, talking to neighbors during the class, use of cell phone, etc....are considered inappropriate.

2. Completion of all the required readings.

3. A midterm exam. This will be drawn from the lectures and required readings (50 points).

4. A final exam. This will be comprehensive, and will be drawn from the lectures and required readings (100 points).
5. Participation in the community: Citizen's Day at the Capitol, NASW lobby day, rallies, etc.

6. Three short diagnostic papers: 3-4 pages each (10 points/paper).

A. Building a Just Society:

You are the trusted advisor to an omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent dictator. She can effect any decision she wants by fiat. Suppose your boss wants a general principle to use to decide between building a public park and an arts building. What one principle would you suggest? (i.e. majority rule, protect minority interest, some better off and no one worse off, etc...).

This is not a research paper. Please write an answer from the above principles or any other principles you prefer. Briefly justify your position. No research or documentation is necessary. This paper is not about the merits of a park or building, or the process leading to justice. This paper should focus on a specific principle that you feel will lead to justice in any situation.

B. Legal and Principled Foundation of Decision Making:

A legal advisor submitted the following document to your boss to promote a fair and just society. 

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Your boss wants to know what possible consequences may result from this document. What advice can you give her?

Please state your views as you see it. Documentation is not necessary, but justify your position rationally and logically.

C. Ethical/Moral Foundation of Decision Making:

"Should your life always be prolonged?"

Several months ago, a body of an unconscious woman was kept biologically alive for more than two months although her brain had suffered damage too grave to support life. She was pregnant. Doctors kept her in a strange state between life and death for 64 days until her baby was born alive and healthy. Then the artificial devices were turned off. Her heart and breathing stopped and she was dead.

The incident dramatically illustrates the fact that the moment and manner of a person's death today is often the result of a deliberate decision.

Please write your paper by the following outline:
1. The background of the issue.
2. Case for maximum effort.
3. Case against maximum effort.
4. Possible consequences both good and bad.
5. Your position.

7. An analytical paper: (20 pages) (100 points).

Select a substantive policy area around which you would like to focus on during the semester. Show
how some of the policies that are in place today have became resources for strengthening individuals, families, and communities. Choose one from the following list: Americans with Disability Act (ADA); Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); Minimum Wage; Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP); Food Stamp; Women, Infant, and Children (WIC); Head Start; Job Corp; Community Mental Health Center Act; Indian child Welfare Act; Title 9 of Higher Education Act; Title 1 School; Mainstream (PL 94-142).

It is important that you relate and synthesize the information covered in the course to the full extent. In addition to class materials, draw upon library, field research, and agency experiences that you believe are relevant. A professionally competent use of references and documentations are essential to a good paper. Your paper should reflect evidence of quality research and thoughtful analysis. One way to demonstrate that is by showing strong and accurate references and documentations.

Your manuscript should be double spaced and 1 inch margin all the way around. Follow the APA writing style and you must submit a hard copy of your paper to me.

Write your paper by covering the following issues.

1. Description of the policy
   a. Introduction/background
   b. Objectives
   c. Underlying values
   d. Targeted population
   e. Influence of other related policies

2. Proponents and their allies
   a. Legislative sponsors (senators, rep.)
   b. Strategies, tactics, reasoning, and arguments used to promote their position (i.e what actions did they take etc.).
   c. Allies—community groups, interest groups etc
   d. Strategies, tactics, reasoning, and arguments used to promote the adoption of the policy (i.e what actions did they take, etc.).

3. Reactions of opponents and their allies
   a. Legislative opponents
   b. Strategies, tactics, reasoning, and arguments used to defeat the policy.
   c. Allies—community groups, interest groups etc
   d. Strategies, tactics, reasoning, and arguments used by the opponents to defeat the proposed policy (what did they do etc.).

3. How did the policy eventually got adopted
   a. describe the dynamics, interactions, negotiations, compromises made, amendments made etc.

4. Conclusion
   a. Strengths and weaknesses of the policy/program.

8. All late work will be penalized by 10 percent per day. Work turned in after the class is considered late. "Make-up exams" are not allowed. However, I am willing to review extenuating circumstances on the individual basis.

8. Grading
95-100 % = A   60-64   C-
90-94   A-   55-59   D+
85-89   B+   50-54   D
80-84   B   45-49   D-
75-79   B-   70-74   C+
70-74   C+   65-69   C
65-69   C

9. If you have any individual concerns, problems or seek special considerations, please do not bring them up in the class. These are to be brought up either after class or during the consultation hours.

10. While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that your professor will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. See http://www.byu.edu/honorcode for specific examples of intentional and inadvertent plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

11. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU=s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor, contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or contact the Honor code Office at 422-2847.

12. Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have an disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (1520 WSC). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Required Textbooks: None

Course Content: References with (*) are required readings. All readings are located in the electronic reserve.

Jan. 5  INTRODUCTION:
WHAT IS POLICY?
POLICY PRACTICE AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER


HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHIES OF SOCIAL WORK
VALUES, IDEOLOGY, ETHICS, AND SOCIAL POLICY

* NASW Code of Ethics. NASW Press, 1999. (read for general knowledge)


Barusch, Amenda S. "Social Justice and Social Work." Foundation of Policy. USA:


Jan. 19  ISSUES IN POLICY-MAKING AND POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN THE U.S.


Jan. 26 A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION


Feb. 2 POLICY MAKERS AND THEIR INFLUENCE
POLICY CHANGE AND WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS


Feb. 9 DECISION MAKING IN PUBLIC ARENA: PRINCIPLED DECISION-MAKING

(Feb. 9) Social Justice paper due


Feb. 16 STRUCTURE OF POLICY ARGUMENT AND POLICYMAKING SKILLS

(Feb. 16 Midterm Exam)


Feb. 23 SOCIAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY
FORECASTING AND EVALUATING POLICIES
EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY-MAKING AND EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY PRACTICE


IMPACT OF SOCIAL POLICIES ON MINORITIES AND DIVERSE POPULATION:
RACISM, SEXISM, AND OPPRESSION (e.g. race: Hispanics, Blacks, Asians, etc, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental abilities)
SEARCH FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND MECHANISMS AND VALUES THAT
OPPRESS, MARGINALIZE, ALIENATE, OR CREATE PRIVILEGE AND POWER

(Mar. 2) Legal Foundation of Decision Making paper due


Mar. 16 POVERTY AND THE WELFARE STATE IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ARENA ADVOCACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE


Mar. 23 HEALTH CARE POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

(Mar. 23) Ethical/Moral Foundation of Decision Making paper due


*McPhee, Debra M. A Health Care in the United States: The Battle of Reform. In M. Holosko


Fein, Rachia A Model for Health Insurance: Can we learn from Canadian Example?@ *Dissent*, 38 (Winter) 14-17.

Mar. 30 SOCIAL INSURANCE: An Analysis of Social Security


Apr. 6 THE GOALS OF THE NEXT DECADE AND CENTURY NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE


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**Apr. 13**  
THE LAST DAY OF CLASS  
REVIEW  
ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE

**Apr. 16**  
FINAL EXAM  2:00-4:00 pm (Sat).