Part I: Course information

SW 8563-Advanced Policy Advocacy
2 credits

Faculty Contact:
Name:
Email:
Phone:
Office Location:

Short Description:
Students are paired with social service, social policy and social justice agencies and coalitions to gain an in-depth knowledge of agenda setting, legislative research, and legislative advocacy in relation to specific legislation being proposed in the Minnesota state legislature. Course will tie policy theory to real-world practice.

Long Description:
In this concentration year course, students have the opportunity to work directly with an agency or coalition currently engaged in policy advocacy at the Minnesota State legislature. Students will learn the nuanced nature of the legislative policy making process, how organizations, coalitions and interest groups influence legislation, the role of partisan politics in policymaking, and the role of lobbyists in the policy process. In addition, students will focus on how social workers working in all levels of practice can be engaged in the policy advocacy process, including both those whose job description includes policy advocacy as a job duty, as well as other social workers who are engaged as part of their responsibilities to their communities, clients, partners, agencies and/or profession.

Pre-requisites:

1. This is an advanced social work class, and the material presented in this class is at an advanced level. Social Work students enrolled in this course should have completed the foundation classes listed below, or have advanced standing status.
    SW 5051 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment
    SW 5801 - Policies and Programs in American Social Welfare
    SW 8151 - Social Work Practice Methods: Individuals and Systems
    SW 8152 - Social Work Practice Methods: Families and Groups
Clinical Licensure Hours:
This course contains some clinical content, as required by the Minnesota Board of Social Work for eligibility for the Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). The number of hours in each required category is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Differentiation Diagnosis</th>
<th>Assessment Based Treatment Planning</th>
<th>Clinical Intervention Methods</th>
<th>Evaluation Methodologies</th>
<th>SW Values and Ethics</th>
<th>Culturally Specific Clinical Assessment</th>
<th>Other Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part II: COURSE OUTCOMES

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a theoretical, conceptual and practical knowledge of the state legislative, budgetary and bureaucratic policy making processes and structures.
2. Understand the democratic process and the role of compromise within the legislative process.
3. Frame issues
4. Describe the key action points within the policy making processes in which professional lobbyists, legislators, social workers and citizens can influence policy making.
5. Demonstrate the ability to use tools for following the legislative processes, such as the daily calendar, committee schedules, etc.
6. Demonstrate the ability to use policy advocacy and lobbying techniques that are tailored to the particular issue, organization and political climate, such as agenda-setting, coalition building, legislative visits, letter/call-in campaigns, hearings, media relations, online advocacy, social media, actions etc.
7. Develop an advocacy campaign based upon an understanding of the legislative processes, the political climate, and the organization/coalition’s values and positions.
8. Discuss how social workers can be involved in the policy advocacy process.
Social Work Practice Competencies
Successful completion of this concentration course implies that the student has achieved competency in the following advanced practice behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.1 – Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply knowledge of social services, policies and programs relevant to their area of practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.2 – Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and analyze value-based and ethical dilemmas that arise in their area of practice, using professional codes of ethical standards and through appropriate professional consultation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency: 2.1.3 – Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to their area of practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EP 2.1.5 – Advance human rights and social and economic justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gain a full comprehension about disparities and their development,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contribute to knowledge about institutional barriers to equality and apply concentration-appropriate strategies to advance social and economic justice.

**Competency: 2.1.8 – Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being**

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
<th>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</th>
<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Understand, compare, analyze, formulate and advocate for policies in an area of practice</td>
<td>Whole class?</td>
<td>Analysis of Bill, journal and reflection paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART III: COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Required texts and materials**


In addition, students are expected to regularly read the daily legislative report in the Minnesota Star Tribune or the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

*List and briefly describe all assignments and due dates.*

The following are the major assignments for this course:

**Policy Advocacy Project**

The major project for this course involves working on a current legislative advocacy campaign. Students are to spend at least 30 hours participating with a local organization or coalition that is working on legislation. Students are expected to negotiate a participatory role with a social service agency, a
coalition, or an advocacy group that is engaged in advocacy work at the state legislature. Students whose field placement agencies are engaged in legislative advocacy work may elect to work on issues with that agency. Those who do not have access to legislative advocacy work in their current field placements will be given a range of choices of agencies or interest groups who have agreed to assist with this learning experience. (Some representatives from these groups will present opportunities in class # 2).

Students will select one or two bills - of interest to themselves and to the group with which they are working - to follow through the legislative process. It also will include participation with the advocacy group chosen and attendance at various allied organizations or community groups involved with the issue chosen. Activities will vary based on the particular advocacy campaign, but students are required to have at least two legislative visits, attend at least two hearings, attend a community meeting, and participate regularly in advocacy planning activities. Other activities will vary, but may include legislative research, facilitating a mass campaign, media relations, online advocacy, or a variety of other advocacy strategies. To facilitate this experience, students will not meet in the classroom weeks 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14. There are several assignments required related to this project.

1. Participation Contract (Due Week 3)
   Students are to develop a contract and action plan detailing the advocacy campaign on which they are working and their expected activities. (These of course will be subject to change!)

2. Bill or Issue Paper (Due Week 4)
   Students are to develop a two page paper describing the bill they will be working on, including its sponsors, its committee assignment, a brief history of the bill and/or the problem it is intended to address, and the groups for and against it. If the bill has not yet been introduced, then an overview of the Issue.

3. Online Log, Bill Tracking & Journal (Weekly beginning Week 3 – Week 16)
   Students will keep a weekly log of all activities connected with following, analyzing and promoting the bill(s) or issues you have chosen. Activities may include meetings with the advocacy group you have joined, community meetings related to the subject, visits to the House, Senate and their respective legislative committees, interviews with prime players, phone calls, e-mail, internet and other media research, and letters written.
Your log should include the date, the location and the length of time of the activity. (Hours should be tallied up at the end of the Log) A short narrative of what transpired and a critical analysis of the activity should be included with each entry.

The log week will be from Friday to Thursday. Students can turn in the log for the previous week anytime from Thursday of the end of the log week until Monday evening of the previous log week (I will put specific dates in here when I know when it is being taught). Logs that are turned in after Monday at midnight will lose one point per day. This log will be on the Moodle website, and will be viewable by the instructor and other classmates.

4. Final Reflection Paper (Week 16)
The final course paper will be a roughly 8-12 page paper based on their particular advocacy experience. This paper will include a history of the bill, a brief analysis of the bill, an analysis of the strategies and tactics used by those both inside/outside legislature on all sides regarding the bill, the status of the bill as of May, and an analysis of the bill in light of social work values, policy and practice. This paper MUST include references to course readings and materials, as well as interviews with legislators and others on both sides of the bill, and local media reports. Students will also provide a personal reflection of their experience in this process, including an analysis of their own policy advocacy competencies.

5. Final Presentation (Week 16)
On the last day of class you will be asked to give a three-minute mock “press conference” in which you will advocate for (or against) the bill you have chosen to follow. Or you may choose to “testify” on this bill in front of a legislative committee. Class members not presenting will be expected to act as members of the press, legislative committee chairs, and committee members.

Additional instructions and guidelines for completing the above assignments will be distributed in class, as well as criteria for the grading of each assignment.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTING**

The grade weight and due date for each assignment is listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Bill</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this course, students do not earn additional grade points for attendance/participation. However, students are required to attend and to participate in all class sessions, unless they have notified and received permission from the instructor in advance.

**EVALUATION AND GRADING SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To complete the course successfully all students must complete and receive a passing grade for each assignment.

**Course Policies**

There are many University and School of Social Work policies that govern this course. Please go to [http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/Documents/SSWCoursePolicies.pdf](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/Documents/SSWCoursePolicies.pdf) to see a complete description of all the policies.

---

**Part IV: SESSION PLANS**

*Describe your class sessions with more than simply a topic title. Include full citation for required readings; describe class exercises, videos, speakers and the topic they will address.*

**Week #1:**

**Topic:** Introduction to the course

Introduction to the Legislative Process
Introduction to Advocacy projects

Week #2:
Topic: Legislative Process (continued)
Social Work & Policy Advocacy
Guest speakers from coalitions/advocacy groups
Students link with coalitions/advocacy groups

Readings: Gelak, 1 and 4;
Haynes & Mickelson, 1, 2 & 3


Session #3
Topic: Orientation to the State Legislature (Meet at State capitol)

Readings: Minnesota State Government Series. Read entire 9 part series providing an overview about Minnesota, its history and the structure and functioning of the government.
http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/govser/govser.htm

Week #4:
Topic: Policy Models for Advocacy
Issue Drivers

Readings: Gelak, 3
Haynes & Michelson, 4 & 5

Week #5:
Topic: Social Workers Role in Lobbying
Developing an Advocacy Strategy/Campaign
Lobbying tools
Readings: Gelak, 5
Haynes & Mickelson, Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

Week #6:
Topic: Campaign & Lobbying tools, continued


Week #7:
Topic: Effective Communication and Media
Readings: Gelak, 8 & 10

Week #8: No Class
Topic: Work at Legislature or with Advocacy Group.

Week #9 SPRING BREAK

Week #10:
Topic: Coalition building
Readings: Gelak, 9

Week #11: No Class
Topic: Work at Legislature or with Advocacy Group.
Week #12:

Topic: Ethical issues in Policy Advocacy
Evaluating Policy Advocacy Efforts

Readings: Gelak, 2


Week #13: No Class

Topic: Work at Legislature or with Advocacy Group.

Week #14: No Class

Topic: Work at Legislature or with Advocacy Group.

Week #15:

Topic: Social Workers as Politicians’

Readings: Haynes & Mickelson, Chapters 11


Week #16:

Topic: Lessons learned.
Class presentations
Course Wrap-Up

Readings: Haynes & Mickelson, Chapters 11

**ADDITIONAL READINGS**


