University of Minnesota School of Social Work

Syllabus

SW 8807-International and Comparative Social Welfare Policy

Part I: Course information

SW 8807-International and Comparative Social Welfare Policy
2 credits

Faculty contact:
Name:
Email:
Phone:
Office Location:

1. Course descriptions:
   a. Short Version:
      This course focuses on three interrelated aspects of international social welfare: cross-national comparisons of social welfare policies, major international conventions and treaties relating to social welfare, and social development theories and policies. Students examine the above areas through in-depth analyses of selected countries’ policies, international agreements, and social development strategies.
   b. Long Description:
      This course focuses on three interrelated aspects of international social welfare: cross-national comparisons of social welfare policies, major international conventions and treaties relating to social welfare, and social development theories and policies. Several typologies of welfare states are examined and critiqued. International conventions on human rights, children’s rights; rights of persons with disabilities, refugees, and human trafficking are reviewed and critiqued. Students undertake in-depth analyses of selected countries’ policies, international agreements, and social development strategies and present their work in class.

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
   SW 8153 - Models of Community Intervention
   SW 8841 - Social Work Research Methods
2. If you are not a Social Work student, you need permission of the instructor

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>Differential 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>Hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Part II: Course outcomes**

**Course Outcomes**
After successfully completing the course, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate understanding of the differences among countries in how social welfare policies are organized and their various strengths and limitations.
- Demonstrate understanding of economic, political, and cultural factors that shape the social policies of countries.
- Demonstrate understanding of the intended and the actual impact of selected international treaties and international conventions on people’s welfare and on the conduct of social work practice.
- Identify and describe the roles of major international governmental and non-governmental organizations that relate directly to social welfare.
- Identify various theories, policies, and strategies for social development and be able to critique them in relation to their impacts on people’s welfare and on the conduct of social work practice.
- Apply knowledge of social policy alternatives to the design and advocacy of policy reforms.

**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: 2.1.2 – 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>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covered in class through (i.e., activity, reading, content)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed</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>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competency: 2.1.3 – Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments**
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:

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and synthesize multiple sources of knowledge to understand policy and practice issues related to their area of practice.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EP 2.1.5 – Advance human rights and social and economic justice**

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Behaviors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gain a full comprehension about disparities and their development, contribute to knowledge about institutional barriers to equality and apply concentration-appropriate strategies to advance social and economic justice.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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>
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<th>Assessed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Understand, compare, analyze, formulate and advocate for policies in an area of practice</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Competency: 2.1.9 – Respond to contexts that shape practice**

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers:

<table>
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<th>Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assess the impact of historical and contemporary contexts on practice and policy in their area of practice.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are responsive to dynamic changes in society and in their areas of practice.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Policy Brief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part III: Course requirements

Teaching Methods: Lectures, required readings, suggested readings, small group case discussions, class discussions, occasional guest speakers, development and in-class presentation of two papers with feedback from the instructor.


Assignments
The following are the major assignments for this course:

**Paper I** – Due Week 8 at the beginning of class (45% of final grade).
Choose two countries having different social welfare systems. Select a social welfare policy area of interest to you and compare how it is handled in each country, using Chamber & Wedel’s framework. Include discussion of the history of the policy in each country, including political, social, cultural or other factors that have shaped it. Cite pros and cons of each approach, drawing on available data. The paper can be around 15 pages in length. Guidelines for this paper will be distributed in class.

**Paper II** - (Team Project) - Due Week 15 at the beginning of class (45% of final grade).
Students work in teams of no more than three people to complete a written report and do a PowerPoint presentation of its main points in class. The paper can be around 17-20 pages in length. All members of the team will receive the same grade for this assignment. Guidelines for the paper and presentation will be distributed in class.

Choose between:

(A) Choose a country and a development issue of interest to you. Analyze the social development strategy employed in that country to address the issue and the development theory underlying that strategy. Critique the strategy, drawing on available evidence regarding impacts on human welfare and on the conduct of practice; barriers to progress, any unintended consequences, and needed changes.

OR

(B) Select an international convention or treaty that relates to social welfare in an area of your
interest. Discuss the agreement’s intent and scope, the history and the context of its
development and enactment (including political, cultural or social factors that shaped it), and
the extent of compliance by signatory countries. Critique the convention or treaty, discussing
both strengths, limitations, gaps, and any needed revisions in content or in promulgation and
enforcement.

Grading

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 (total 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper comparing two countries’ policies</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper analyzing an international agreement OR a country’s social development strategy</td>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are expected to attend and to participate in all class sessions, unless they have notified
and received permission from the instructor in advance. Participation includes preparing for
class by doing the reading in advance and frequently contributing to class discussions. Students
who miss more than 3 classes will not meet the minimum standards for passing the course.

Evaluation and Grading Scale

A    =  93 - 100
A -  =  90 - 92
B+   =  87 - 89
B    =  83 - 86
B-   =  80 - 82
C+   =  77 - 79
C    =  73 - 76
C-   =  70 - 72
D+   =  67 - 69
D    =  60 - 66

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.

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**Part IV: Course content**

**Session Plans**

**Session #1:** Topic: *What is Social Welfare Policy? Frameworks for Classifying and Comparing Social Policies*

- Is there a difference between social policy and social welfare policy? What is comparative social welfare policy? Useful frameworks for analyzing social welfare policies. Can meaningful social policy comparisons be made across national borders?
- What are economic, political, and cultural factors that help shape social policies?
- Esping-Andersen’s three types of social policies: liberalist, corporatist, and social democratic, and a critique of Esping-Andersen’s types.

**Readings:**


**Session #2:** Topic: *Social Democratic/Universalistic Examples: The Nordic Countries and Britain*

- What factors and perspectives gave rise to the universalist conception of social welfare in the Nordic countries? How extensive is the scope of welfare policy in these countries? How do Britain’s policies differ? What policy changes have occurred recently in these countries and what pressures have given rise to these changes?

**Readings:**
Session #3: Topic: Corporatist-Statist Models: Germany and Italy

How do the assumptions underlying the corporate-statist model differ from the social democratic model? In what sense is this a more conservative model? How do Italy’s social policies differ from Germany’s? (Is there a ‘Mediterranean Model’?).

Readings:


Session #4: Topic: Liberalist Models: The United States, Canada, Australia

Why have these three countries taken a different path from European models? What underlying theories and assumptions do their social policies have in common and how do they differ?

Readings:
Session #5: Topic: Former East Bloc Countries: Russia as an Example
With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, how did social policy change?
What remained the same?
Readings:

Session #6: Topic: Welfare Policies in Countries Experiencing Rapid Change and Development
What social policies have been enacted in countries recently undergoing rapid economic development?
Readings:


Session #9: Topic: International Agreements Relating to Social Welfare—Part I
Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Convention on Rights of the Child; Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a critique.

Readings:
Session #10:  Topic:  *International Agreements Relating to Social Welfare—Part II*  
Refugees, Human Trafficking, and a critique.

Readings:
[http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html](http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2.html)  [Peruse the page, then click on “The 1951 Refugee Convention,” and then click on “Questions and Answers.”]


Session #11:  Topic:  *Policies and Strategies for Social Development*  
What is social development and what is its relationship to social welfare?  
What are the main policies and strategies countries use for social development?

Readings:


Session #12:  Topic:  *International Organizations and Social Development - Part I*  
United Nations structure and organizations, the World Bank, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Labour
Organization, USAID and their policies and strategies. Critiques of these organizations.

Readings:


Session #13: Topic: International Organizations and Social Development – Part II

What are typical roles of government and non-governmental organizations in social development? What have we learned from experience? What roles do international social work and social welfare organizations play (ICSW, IASSW, IFSW, ICSD, etc.)?

Readings:
Sessions #14-15: Topic: *Student Presentations of Paper Two: Analysis and Critique of an International Treaty or an Agreement relating to Social Welfare*

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**Additional Bibliography**


