SOCW 510: Policy Context of Practice

THIS IS A SAMPLE OUTLINE. ACTUAL COURSE OUTLINE MAY VARY IN STRUCTURE, REQUIRED READINGS, TEXTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Description:
Reviews and analyzes a number of explanations of the policy making process. Examines who makes policy in both governmental and voluntary human service organizations and the impact of policy on consumers and practitioners. Analyzes the policy/practice interface and uses substantive policy domains to illustrate how policy both enhances and constrains practice and how practice in turn can influence policy. Students are encouraged to develop their own understandings of the contributions of practice to policy.

Overall Course Goal:
To develop a critical theoretical framework for the analysis of social policies and their connection to social work practice and the larger socio-political historical context in which they are developed, function and/or contested.

Learning Objectives:
- Develop a critical theoretical framework to understand the link between social policy and historically specific socioeconomic and political systems, and the role of social policy in both the formation and ruling of subjects and citizens.
- Apply this theoretical framework to a critical analysis of the impact of social policy on social work practice.
- Apply this theoretical framework to a critical understanding of the impact of social policy on specific populations and on the perpetuation of interlocking colonial, nationalist, racial, patriarchal, classist, ableist, etc. social power relations.
- Engage the conceptual framework to explore social justice oriented alternatives.

In this course, you are encouraged to reflect on the intersection of social policy and your own practice contexts and your role as social worker.

Required Readings
Electronic articles available on CourseSpaces and on the Library’s database

Contact:
I generally answer emails and provide feedback on forum discussion during weekdays and not so much on weekends or evenings (via CourseSpaces). If wanting to schedule an appointment in person, phone or Skype we can figure out a time that best works for us.
Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15% assigned at the end of Week 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% assigned at the end of Week 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal Election 2015: Course Commentary</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Final Paper – Critical Policy Analysis             | 40% |
| December 6th by 11:59 pm                           |     |

1. Participation 30%

15% assigned at the end of Week 6
15% assigned at the end of Week 12

Participation is both a required component of a distance course as well as an assignment. As outlined in the School’s policies, weekly participation and contributions to the course site are required. This course includes these participatory activities which are included in this assignment:

- Weekly group postings and discussions in response to the question or activity of the week.
- Posting and discussions to the Federal Election 2015 group assignment. In the week in which you are responsible for preparing and posting the Election assignment you are not required to make any posts to the weekly question discussion (though you are welcome to do so).

The intent of grading participation is to value your time and contributions to the course and our shared learning and posts should be written in that spirit and not as if you are writing to the instructor to grade. While the course is online, we are operating in real-time and therefore our participation needs to follow the course schedule. The Units typically begin on a Sunday or Monday and end the following weekend. The expectations for posting include:

- A substantive contribution to the week’s discussion forums by Tuesday (midnight) and at least two brief posts prior to end of the week (Sunday midnight).

Let’s follow the guidelines used in other courses in this program; a substantive post is considered less than 250 words and a brief post is considered less than 150 words. These guidelines are intended to balance your need to contribute to the discussions with the amount of reading required for you to participate in the group.

2. Federal Election 2015: Course Commentary 30%

If a federal election falls in the middle of a social policy course ….

The learning objective for this assignment is to appraise how a federal election reacts to social policy issues. For this assignment:

- When posted on our site; select a presentation week (post October 19th election).
- Select and follow an issue or a specific lobby in the weeks leading up to the federal election.
• Collect evidence throughout these weeks that will inform a presentation including visuals to be included in a format such as powerpoint, Prezi, video, infographic, etc.

• Create a presentation that can engage your small group in discussion of how your topic was (or wasn’t) an election issue. The presentation should be less than 15 mins in length. Please note that this is not a partisan project and the group engagement must be focused on a critical discussion of the social issue/lobby and the election while respecting everyone’s right to vote for their candidate and political party. The presentation may address; how was the social policy/issue portrayed as an election issue by the various players including those lobbying for an issue or policy, and/or against it, the different parties platforms or responses, the “public” responses or engagement, the media coverage, etc.

• Post your presentation on the Sunday of your designated week including a brief introductory post that posts questions to guide group discussion for the week. Continue group engagement through the week and on the Saturday, post a brief summary. The summary should include a critique of what could be learned from your example to engage election processes for policy change as well as your thoughts on the outcome and future for your issue.

Grading criteria:
• Extent to which you address the assignment instructions and objective, this includes the relevant focus, the posting of the presentation, the facilitation of the group discussion and the summary post.
• Extent to which sources are utilized and integrated into the presentation and knowledge of the perspectives related to the issue.
• Extent to which you are able to effectively express your knowledge of the issues, the debates and what transpired as well as respond to your group discussion.
• The application of a nuanced critical perspective to policy and practice.
• Extent to which your overall presentation is succinct and well-organized. On the note of succinct; please do not burden your group with links to extra sources such as online videos or radio interviews, etc – try to keep such sources brief and within your presentation as much as possible.

Assignment 3: Final Paper – Critical Policy Analysis 40%
Due: December 6th by 11:59 pm

The objective of this assignment is to examine a social policy issue of your choice. This is an academic paper and as such must meet all academic conventions. The paper should address:
• What is the social problem being identified and what is the policy response(s)/
• What are the theoretical frameworks informing this issue and policies?
• What are the links between this policy and practice?
• Provide a policy analysis that clearly articulates a theoretical framework.
• Provide recommendations based on this analysis such as policy alternative strategies for practice or strategies for contesting the status quo.
The paper may be centered on a certain policy, or a certain social issue or a certain practice setting. If focused on an issue or practice there would most likely be several intersecting policies. The paper can either explore these intersecting policies or select a particular policy as a focus. Alternatively, you can reflect on a social policy that impacts on specific conditions of your life and conduct a similar analysis as described above.

The paper should not exceed 15 pages and be formatted as an academic paper and include proper citations and bibliography. Assignments will be graded on their capacity to apply theoretical frameworks as part of critical policy analysis, the depth of understanding of the issues and policies, the understanding of the links between policy and practice, the insights demonstrated in providing recommendations, writing style and formatting. The assignment is to be submitted in the assignment drop-off box on CourseSpaces.

Important note about the final assignment:
In order to pass this course, students must obtain at least a passing grade in the final assignment in spite of the accumulated grade of other course work.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Course introduction
Introductions and familiarization with CoursePages.
Readings:
http://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/arbutus/article/view/11639/3279

Week 2: What is (social) policy? What is a theory-based approach?
Readings:


Week 3: Why social work needs a critical policy framework
Readings:


**Week 4:** Policy in the contexts of Colonization, Neoliberalism and Globalization

**Readings:**


**Optional:**


**Week 5:** What’s the problem?

**Readings:**


**Week 6:** Policy Analysis & Intersectionality

**Readings:**

Introduction: Intersectionality-based Policy Analysis (Pages 33-46)


Optional Reading:


Week 7: Policy making processes

Readings:


**Week 8: Policy implementation**

**Readings:**


**Week 9: Case study: Aboriginal health policy**

**Readings:**


Upstream’s Max FineDay Blog: [http://www.thinkupstream.net/dreaming_healthy_nations](http://www.thinkupstream.net/dreaming_healthy_nations)


**Optional Reading:**


**Week 10: Contesting Policy: NGOs & Civil Society**

**Readings:**


**Optional Reading:**

**READING WEEK**

**Week 11: Participatory Public Policy**

**Readings:**


"Nothing about us without us": a manifesto by people who use illegal drugs. (2005). Ottawa: Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Week 12: Case studies – see course site
No readings.

School Notes:

Course Experience Survey (CES): I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of every course at the University of Victoria, all students will have the opportunity to complete a brief, anonymous, online survey on their experience as a student in the course. The purpose of the CES is to provide feedback to the instructor, the department and the university as a means to improve and sustain the quality of teaching, course design, and program development. The University regards it as a student’s responsibility to provide such feedback in order to support the constant improvement of programs for future students. Instructions to students will be provided for each course to obtain access to the survey via laptop, tablet, or mobile device.

Request for Accommodation: Please note that if you need assistance in order to fully participate and complete the assignments due to disability or for any other reason, you need to discuss this with your assigned instructor at the outset of the course or as soon as possible. The Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD) staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations http://rcsd.uvic.ca/. The School of Social Work’s Policy for People with Disabilities can be viewed at the following link: http://socialwork.uvic.ca/policies/pwdis.htm. School policies on accommodation, grading, submitting assignments, participation, course evaluation, grading, etc. can be accessed at http://www.uvic.ca/hsd/socialwork/current/msw/policies/index.php. Please also note Faculty of Graduate Studies policies that apply to all graduate students http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GRAD/index.html.

Policy on late assignments: Please note that generally no extensions are given on any of the assignments in the course unless the student has accommodations. A student who is unable to meet an assignment deadline due to illness, accident, or family affliction, may be eligible for an extension. Unless a student negotiates with an instructor prior to the deadline, a penalty for late assignments will be applied. Please see the School’s policies regarding late assignments and late penalties.

Plagiarism and academic integrity: Plagiarism involves using other people’s work without due acknowledgement, irrespective of the site where the author’s work is published. Plagiarism may be done deliberately or unwittingly. Either way, it constitutes a serious act of academic
misconduct and will result in failure in the course. If you may be unclear about what constitutes plagiarism and how you might prevent it from occurring, consult the Policy on Academic Integrity at http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2005/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html.

Other Policies: Please access the following links for policies on accommodation, assessment of student learning, submitting assignments, attendance and participation, course challenge, course evaluation, and grading: http://socialwork.uvic.ca/policies