



# USC | School of Social Work

## Social Work 536

### Policy and Advocacy In Professional Social Work

#### Three Units

*The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.*

- Council on Social Work Education, March 2015

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**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Course Day:**  
Tuesday

**Course Time:**  
1:00 – 2:50 pm

**Course Location:**  
WPH B26

#### I. COURSE PREREQUISITES

Policy and Advocacy in Professional Social Work (SOWK 536) is built upon a liberal arts undergraduate foundation. Students are expected to have a basic understanding of how American government works at the local, state and national levels, and a rudimentary familiarity with the existence of social welfare policies.

#### II. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

Social workers practice within complex and interconnecting systems of policy, programs and communities that directly and indirectly impact their clients' lives. This course studies and assesses the impact of anti-poverty programs, security-building insurance systems, and opportunity-creating public policies on clients seeking to navigate within and across these systems, and on the social worker's role therein, at the programmatic, community and state-wide levels.

### III. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a substantive understanding of the American social welfare policies and programs developed and implemented by all levels of government that seek to limit poverty, provide security and create opportunity for people, families and communities. These programs, systems, and policies will be assessed for their adequacy, effectiveness and fairness. Advocacy efforts – past and present – will be explored and even joined in some of these subject areas.

The course will also help develop students' analytic, writing and presentation skills, which are crucial for successful social work practice across the systems, funding streams and communities that make up America. The course seeks to inspire students to develop a case-level, program-level and macro-level policy advocacy orientation, so that – regardless of their professional specialization – USC graduates will be motivated to redress social and economic injustice and empower less advantaged groups.

This course is divided into three modules: (1) the first module examines and assesses programs seeking to alleviate poverty, including the Earned Income Tax Credit, TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid; (2) the second module studies how America uses various social insurances to create and reinforce family and community-level security, and focuses on Social Security, Unemployment and Disability insurances, and Medicare (including the impacts thereon of the Affordable Care Act); and (3) the third module examines how our society seeks to create opportunity through its education and taxation systems. Each of these modules focuses on understanding the policy decisions, financing, program implementation and advocacy interventions creating and impacting these various programs, and the role social workers have within and across them.

SOWK 536 provides a foundation for concentration-specific courses across the clinical and policy arenas, in which students can apply their knowledge, analysis and skill to develop specific improvements across sectors.

### IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Policy and Advocacy in Professional Social Work course (SOWK 536) will:

Objective #	Objectives
1	Demonstrate knowledge of the values, purpose and roles of the social work profession practicing within the contexts of policy systems and program administration at every level of governmental (national, state, local). Identify the multiple policy sectors where social workers currently practice, and understand how social workers intervene and engage in advocacy at the micro, mezzo and macro levels in each of these sectors.
2	Analyze the political, social, and economic histories that have shaped current policy, programmatic and financial aspects of today's United States. Apply critical thinking skills in analyzing these existing programmatic, financing and economic realities, as well as assessing their differing impacts (positive, neutral or negative) on vulnerable populations in American society.
3	Teach students to distinguish, appraise, integrate and attend to changing locales, diverse populations, scientific research, technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services. Distinguish between and integrate policy analysis, advocacy, and social justice using appropriate methodology. Proactively identify common, repetitive and predictable problems across multiple practice settings that could trigger potential advocacy interventions.

Objective #	Objectives
4	Utilize socio-economic and person-in-environment system frameworks to identify unresolved client/ patient/consumer problems that students will see in their professional work in specific agencies and communities. Understand human behavior across the life course, the range of social systems in which people live, and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being, for the purpose of intervening at points where people interact with their environments.
5	Understand and interact with the role local communities and neighborhoods play in a person's/family's health and welfare. Develop an understanding of how the student might engage in advocacy at the micro, mezzo and/or macro level across diverse practice settings. Provide advocacy-practice experiences in writing as well as presenting.

## V. COURSE FORMAT / INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This class will include a variety of teaching/learning modalities. The instructor will provide lectures, but classes will be interactive and students will be encouraged to discuss their ideas and experiences. Selected sessions will feature videos, in-class exercises, and/or speakers to illustrate the topics under examination. Material from the field will be used to integrate theory and intention with practice and impacts. As class discussion is an integral part of the learning process, students are expected to come to class ready to discuss the required readings, and its application to theory and practice.

## VI. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning for this course relates to one of more of the following 10 social work core competencies:

Social Work Core Competencies	SOWK 534	Course Objective
1 Professional Identity	*	1
2 Ethical Practice	*	1
3 Critical Thinking	*	1 - 5
4 Diversity in Practice	*	2 and 3
5 Human Rights & Justice	*	2
6 Research Based Practice	*	3
7 Human Behavior		
8 Policy Practice	*	1, 3, 4 and 5
9 Practice Contexts	*	3, 4 and 5
10 Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate	*	2, 3, 4 and 5

The following tables explain the highlighted competencies for this course, the related student learning outcomes, and the method of assessment:

Competencies/ Knowledge, Values, Skills	Student Learning Outcomes	Method of Assessment
<p><b>Professional Identity</b>—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Professional Identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values.</li> <li>▪ Know the profession’s history.</li> <li>▪ Commit themselves to the profession’s enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.</li> </ul>	1. Advocate for social policy that will impact and/or be relevant clients/populations served by social workers	Assignment 1, 2 and Class Participation
	2. Demonstrate ability to represent community needs from a social work perspective	Assignments 1 and 2
	3. Attend to professional roles and boundaries	Assignment 1 and Class Participation
	4. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.	All assignments and Class Participation
	5. Engage in active advocacy campaign(s)	Assignment 2 and Class Participation
	6. Engage in career-long learning	All assignments and Class Participation

<p><b>Ethical Practice</b>—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Ethical Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fulfill their obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making.</li> <li>▪ Are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.</li> </ul>	7. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation
	8. Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation
	9. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts.	Assignment 3, and Class Participation
	10. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.	Assignment 2 and 3, and Class Participation

<p><b>Critical Thinking</b>—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Critical Thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment.</li> <li>Use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.</li> <li>Understand that critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.</li> </ul>	11. Distinguish, appraise and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.	All Assignments, and Class Participation
	12. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation.	All Assignments, and Class Participation
	13. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and colleagues.	All assignments, and Class Participation

<p><b>Diversity in Practice</b>—Engage diversity and difference in practice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Diversity in Practice:</p> <p>Understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Recognize that the dimensions of diversity reflect inter-sectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.</li> </ul>	14. Recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate -- or create or enhance – privilege and power.	All assignments, and Class Participation
	15. Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.	Class Participation
	16. Recognize and communicate understanding of the importance of <i>difference</i> in shaping life experiences.	Assignment 1 and 2, and Class Participation
	17. View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.	Class participation.

<p><b>Human Rights &amp; Justice</b>—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Human Rights &amp; Justice:</p> <p>Acknowledge that 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. Recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.</li> </ul>	18. Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation
	19. Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.	Assignment 2
	20. Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.	Assignments 2 and 3

<p><b>Policy Practice</b>—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Policy Practice:</p> <p>Understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul>	21. Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.	Assignment 2
	22. Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.	Assignments 2 and 3

<p><b>Practice Contexts</b>—Respond to contexts that shape practice.</p> <p>Social workers competent in Practice Contexts:</p> <p>Are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.</li> </ul>	23. Continuously discover, appraise and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.	All Assignments
	24. Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.	Assignment 2

<p><b>Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate</b>—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.</p> <p>Social workers competent in the dynamic and interactive processes of Engagement, Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation apply the following knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals</li> <li>Using research and technological advances</li> <li>Evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness</li> <li>Developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services</li> <li>Promoting social and economic justice</li> </ul>	25. Engagement: substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Use empathy and other interpersonal skills. Develop a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation
	26. Assessment: collect, organize and interpret client data. Assess client strengths and limitations. Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives. Select appropriate intervention strategies.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation
	27. Intervention: initiate actions to achieve organizational goals. Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities. Help clients resolve problems. Negotiate, mediate and advocate for clients.	Assignments 2 and 3
	28. Evaluation: critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.	Assignments 2 and 3, and Class Participation.

## VII. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES AND GRADING

Assignment	Due Date	% of Final Grade
<b>Assignment 1: Community Assessment</b>	Class 3	20%
<b>Assignment 2: Experiential Activity to Support the Safety Net</b>	Class 10	30%
<b>Assignment 3: Reconfigure the Budget: Paper (15%) and Oral presentation (20%)</b>	Class 15	35%
<b>Class Participation: In-class participation and engagement (10%), and Communication Lab activities (5%)</b>	Ongoing; faculty will check in during wk 6	15%

### Assignment # 1: Community Assessment (20% of course grade, due class 3)

Assignment #1 is a six- to nine-page research-based paper based on the community each student visited during Immersion. It is assigned during the Community Immersion workshops, prior to the first regular class. The purpose of this assignment is for you to demonstrate a professional understanding of the community and assess some of the important aspects thereof, especially as regards issues of poverty, health, and security. This assignment is not a journal of your walk-about: rather, it is a research paper analyzing the community using specific data, on-ground observations, follow-up interviews and visits, and theories of community.

The assignment is broken into the following sections in order to help guide students in sharing a professional perspective regarding the community: Demographics; Community Culture; Decision-making; and Reflections. Grading criteria include compliance with the assignment, professional presentation (conforming to the basic rules of APA, English grammar, spelling and punctuation), and quality of content including evidence of critical thinking and basic understanding of concepts. As this paper is the student's first in our School's program, it may be shared with the School's writing coaches for ungraded assessment and feedback.

### **Assignment # 2: Experiential Activity to Support the Safety Net** (30% of course grade, due by class 10)

The second assignment involves performing a student-chosen activity (writing an op-ed or lobbying an elected official), along with preparing an eight- to 10-page research paper describing and analyzing the activity and the student's role therein. It is assigned during class # 4.

Students may choose between performing the following two activities: (1) research, write, and submit for publication an Op-Ed in a local, statewide or national media outlet on a safety-net policy of concern to you as a professional social worker; or (2) arrange and perform a lobby visit with an elected official on a safety-net policy of concern to you (may work in a group of up to three students).

The paper describing and analyzing this project will include the following sections: Policy Background; Scope of Issue; Perspective; Action Narrative; and Ethical and Theoretical Considerations. Grading criteria will include responsiveness to the assignment; organization and clarity of the information presented; demonstrated effort in researching the media outlet or the advocacy campaign; demonstrated effort in overcoming unexpected issues; critical thinking and use of evidence to support conclusions; and the thoughtful congruence of your activity and perspective with the NASW Code of Ethics.

### **Assignment # 3: Reforming a Budget: written and oral assessment** (35% of course grade, due class # 15)

Assignment # 3 is a small-group project focused on a program, agency, or government budget: students will work in teams to reform a specific budget to respond to a specific scenario while still seeking to impact its objective(s), using the NASW Code of Ethics to help guide spending decisions. This assignment will be given out during class # 12, and is due during class # 15.

Faculty will present students with a budget, as well as several possible scenarios that impact that budget. The students will produce a revised budget meeting the needs of the scenario, write a paper narratively describing and analyzing their funding decisions (worth 15% of course grade), and orally present their revised budget and rationale to their class (worth 20% of course grade). The particular budget to be reviewed will be handed out in class, and will be from of a social service agency, a program within a larger government department such as DCFS, or else of a government entity such as a city or state. The scenarios presented will vary, but usually will either add funding to serve a new clientele or else deplete funding due to external circumstance. The details will be handed out in class.

Grading criteria for the paper include responsiveness to the assignment; the organization, clarity and specificity of the material; a demonstrated understanding of the budget itself, as well as how the revisions will address the identified



issues; the quality of analysis and the use of evidence to support any assertions; the professionalization of the paper's "tone." Grading criteria for the oral presentation includes the effectiveness as well as the professionalism of the in-class delivery of the substantive aspects of team's report, including self-presentation, conciseness, engagement of audience, supporting assertions, team-work, and tonal quality.

**Note on Late Assignments:** Professional practice dictates that deadlines be met. All assignments that are delivered late will experience a grade reduction. The severity of the grade reduction will depend on the circumstances and on the quality and professionalism of the student's communication regarding these circumstances to his/her instructor.

### **Class Participation** (15% of course grade, assessed in totality over fifteen classes)

Student involvement in this class is considered essential to your growth as a practitioner. You will be asked to discuss the material assigned, participate in role-playing and in-class group exercises, share in all-class discussions, and the like. In addition, the Communication Lab has exercises such as "selfie-video" uploads and writing games that are designed to increase your skills.

Faculty will check-in with students around week 6 of the semester to give feedback about participation. The following grading-range criteria will be used:

14 – 15 points: Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation and participation is substantial. Ideas offered are always substantive, provides one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated, persuasively presented, and presented with excellent comportment. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

12 - 13: Very Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation and frequency in participation is high. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Application to in-class material is usually on target and on topic. Challenges are well substantiated, often persuasive, and presented with excellent comportment. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

10 - 11: Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect solid preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and participation is very regular, provides generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Sometimes provides application of class material to cases held. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive with good comportment. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.

7 - 9: Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect some preparation. Ideas offered are somewhat substantive, provides some insights but seldom offers a new direction for the discussion. Participation is somewhat regular. Challenges are sometimes presented, and are sometimes persuasive with adequate comportment. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished slightly.

6 - 7: Inadequate: This person says little in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed. Does not participate actively in exercises but sits almost silently and does not ever present material to the class from exercises. Does not appear to be engaged. Attends class only.

0 - 5: Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive; provides few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. Comportment is negative. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved. Is unable to perform exercises and detracts from the experience.

## Grading

Within the School of Social Work, grades are determined in each class based on the following standards which have been established by the faculty of the School:

Grades of A or A- are reserved for student work which not only demonstrates very good mastery of content but which also shows that the student has undertaken a complex task, has applied critical thinking skills to the assignment, and/or has demonstrated creativity in her or his approach to the assignment. The difference between these two grades would be determined by the degree to which these skills have demonstrated by the student.

The grade of B+ will be given to work which is judged to be very good. This grade denotes that a student has demonstrated a more-than-competent understanding of the material being tested in the assignment.

The grade of B will be given to student work which meets the basic requirements of the assignment. It denotes that the student has done adequate work on the assignment and meets basic course expectations.

The grade of B- will denote that a student's performance was less than adequate on an assignment, reflecting only moderate grasp of content and/or expectations.

The grade of C reflects a minimal grasp of the assignments, poor organization of ideas and/or several significant areas requiring improvement.

Grades between C- to F will be applied to denote a failure to meet minimum standards, reflecting serious deficiencies in all aspects of a student's performance on the assignment.

Class grades will be based on the following numerical standards:

Class Grades		Final Grade	
3.85 – 4	A	93 – 100	A
3.60 – 3.84	A-	90 – 92	A-
3.25 – 3.59	B+	87 – 89	B+
2.90 – 3.24	B	83 – 86	B
2.60 – 2.87	B-	80 – 82	B-
2.25 – 2.50	C+	77 – 79	C+
1.90 – 2.24	C	73 – 76	C
		70 – 72	C-

## VIII. REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

### Required:

- Stern, Mark J. (2015). *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Jansson, Bruce (2015). *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Multiple readings, videos and on-line material may also be assigned and/or handed out on a class-by-class basis, as shared by the instructor.

## Course Schedule—Detailed Description

### Unit 1: Adequacy, Security and Justice

### Date

#### Topics:

- Conceptual framework: the ongoing effort to create Adequacy, Security and Justice .
- How our social safety net is structured: federal to local implementation; cross-system intersectionality
  - Programs to alleviate poverty: EITC, SNAP, Medicaid, TANF.
  - Insurances to create security: Social Security, Disability, Unemployment, Medicare & ACA .
  - Policies to create opportunity: education, and taxation.
- Role of Social Work in developing and administering assistance: pre-New Deal to today's disappearance
- Conceptual framework for role of Social Work: the difference between charity-giving and professionalism; cultural competence; the importance of context; non-traditional social work.
- Hope for the present and future: American society as flexible, empowered, and capable of vast change.

#### Required Readings:

Stern, Mark J. (2015). An Approach to Policy Practice. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 1, pp. 1 – 22). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Advancing Social Justice in 8 Policy Sectors. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 1, pp 2 – 26). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

# First Module: Programs to Alleviate Poverty

## Unit 2: Programs: Family Income, Nutrition and Health

DATE

### Topics:

- EITC, TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid
- Examination of the scope of need in the community, on the aspects ostensibly covered by these programs (i.e. income, food security, health). Examine (i) the application process; (ii) the benefits available; (iii) the participation needed to receive benefits; and (iv) the best expected outcomes.
- Examine the adequacy of the programs compared with the need, and the implementation thereof.
- Examine and discuss the role that social workers do and should play in these safety-net programs.

### Required Readings:

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Trends in Poverty and Income Inequality. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 4, pp. 79 – 94). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Food Insecurity. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 5, pp. 95 – 114). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Public Assistance. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 8, pp. 187 – 202). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in the Safety Net Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 9, pp 245 – 287). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

## Unit 3: Fiscal Systems: Means-tested Programs

DATE

### Topics:

- EITC, TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid
- Explore historicity of how each program came about, and the resulting silos, politicization, and special interests.
- Explore how the programs are funded at the federal level, and other relevant levels.
- Discuss the justness (ie equality; fairness) of the programs' financing, compared with the scope of need, as well as relevant larger social factors.
- Discuss the role of social workers: on the macro-level, to understand how the silos can be made to work together, and what would be needed to reform the silos; and at the mezzo-level, to fairly allocate limited resources to persons / families in need.

### Required Readings:

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Politics and Economics. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 2, pp. 23 – 34). Boston, MA: Pearson.

**Topics:**

- Choosing from one of the EITC, TANF, SNAP or Medicaid programs, this class will begin focusing on effectively communicating to different audiences your perspective about how to improve the program.
- This class will focus on elements of persuasive oral and written communication; review examples thereof; introduce advocacy across different platforms and the effectiveness thereof.
- The second graded assignment will be shared in this class.

**Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Deciding When to Challenge the Status Quo. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 2, pp 29 – 53). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Jansson, Bruce (2015). A Case Example of Mezzo Policy. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 5, pp 130 – 134). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Jansson, Bruce (2015). A Case Example of Mezzo Policy. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 6, pp 137 – 150). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

## Second Module: Insurances to Create Security

**Topics:**

- Social Security, SSI, Disability insurance, and unemployment insurance.
- Examine the scope of need faced by Americans and/or residents living in the selected level of community (local, state, national) who are impacted by poverty in old age or as a survivor, who become or are already disabled, and/or who become unemployed. Assess (i) the resources which are available; (ii) the application process; (iii) the resulting benefits; and (iv) the best expected outcomes for participants.
- Discuss the adequacy (breadth and depth) of the programs' services compared with the scope of need.
- Examine and discuss the role that social workers do and should play in these safety-net programs.

**Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in the Gerontology Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 8, p 203 – 239). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Providing Income and Services to Older American. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 10, pp. 231 – 252). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Disability and Dependence. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 9, pp. 221 – 227). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Allen, Frederick: Social Security, Separating fact from fiction. In *The Saturday Evening Post*, Jan/Feb 2012.

## **Unit 6: Fiscal Systems: Paying for Security**

**DATE**

### **Topics:**

- Social Security, SSI, Disability insurance, unemployment insurance.
- Explore historicity/expansions/reductions of each program
- Explore how the programs are funded at the federal level, and other levels. Assess the scope of need intended to be impacted. Discuss recent issues (such as the social security Trust Fund “running out of money”).
- Assess the justness (i.e., equality; fairness) of programs’ financing, compared with larger social factors
- Discuss the role of social workers to understand these insurances can be made to work together, be sustainable, and be well-implemented.

### **Required Readings:**

Aaron, Henry: Social Security Reconsidered. In *National Tax Journal*, June 2011, pages 385-414.

Crumby, Paul: From Social Security to Social Insecurity. In *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, summer 2012, pp 117 – 127.

## **Unit 7: Programs: Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act: Physical Health**

**DATE**

### **Topics:**

- Medicare (Parts A thru D); Affordable Care Act & various state-level implementation thereof (ie Covered California); examples of successful health-delivery alternatives.
- Examine the scope of need faced by Americans, and/or residents in the local community, impacted by physical health issues. Assess (i) the existing program services / resources, (ii) the application process; (iii) the benefits; and (iv) compare what expected outcomes should be vs. what the actual health outcomes are...
- Describe the reforms and procedures and systems created by the Affordable Care Act; the implementation thereof; and any results therefrom.
- Discuss the adequacy (breadth & depth) of the programs’ coverages, compared with the scope of need. Special cases may be explored, such as veterans’ access to quality medical care.
- Examine and discuss the increasing role social workers have, and should, play in health care systems.

### **Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in the Healthcare Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 7, pp 163 – 196). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Physical and Behavioral Health. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 7, pp. 152 – 172). Boston, MA: Pearson.

## **Unit 8: Programs: Medicare, and the ACA: Behavioral Health**

**DATE**

### **Topics:**

- Medicare and the Affordable Care Act as they pertain to mental health issues and substance abuse; including discuss the Mental Health Parity & Addiction Equity Act of 2008, and the role of “integration.”
- Describe the scope of need faced by Americans, and/or residents in the local community, impacted by mental health issues, and substance abuse. Assess (i) the existing program services / resources; (ii) the application process; (iii) the benefits; and (iv) compare what expected outcomes should be vs. what actual health outcomes are...
- Special issues may be discussed, such as the role of police and jails as *de facto* systems of care.
- Describe the reforms, procedures and systems created by the Affordable Care Act; the implementation thereof; and any results.
- Discuss the adequacy (breadth & depth) of the programs’ coverages, compared with the scope of need; including an assessment of innovative solutions impacting these problems
- Examine and discuss the role social workers have, and should, play in the mental health and substance abuse systems.

### **Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in the Mental Health Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 10, pp 291 – 317). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Mental Health. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 7, pp. 172 – 176). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Salasin, Susan: Evolution of Women’s Trauma-Integrated Services at SAMHSA. In *Journal of Community Psychology*, July 2005.

## **Unit 9: Fiscal System: Paying for Health**

**DATE**

### **Topics:**

- Medicare (Parts A – D) & the Affordable Care Act.
- Explore historicity/expansions/reduction of each program; include as a case study the Bush administrations expansion of Part D, as well as the Obama creation of the ACA.
- Explore how these programs are funded at federal level, flowing thru and amongst state, corporate and local players.

- Discuss the justness (ie equality; fairness) of the programs' financing and priorities, compared with larger social factors and various populations' health outcomes
- Discuss the role of social workers in interacting with the financing and payment systems for health care

**Required Reading:**

To be handed out in class.

**Unit 10: The Power of Advocacy: Case Study of Making Change and Saving Lives**

**DATE**

**Topics:**

- Students informally share their second-assignment policy, activity and any outcomes
- Screen and discuss the multiple-aspects of the documentary *How to Survive a Plague* , including:
  - how decisions are made, and how they can be influenced
  - “inside” advocacy vs. direct-action “in-your-face” activism
  - treatment advocacy (we want better drug treatment) vs. social advocacy (we want equal rights)
  - role of personal empowerment, as well as collaborative empowerment, and how they mix
  - role of science as a driving force

**Required Reading:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Initiating Policy Advocacy at Three Levels. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 3, pp 58 – 73). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

**Third Module: Systems to Create Opportunity**

**Unit 11: Programs: Education and Child Welfare**

**DATE**

**Topics:**

- Head Start; public K-12 education & charter schools; child welfare & transitional youth programs; community & four year colleges. Discuss the American ideal in which education is *the* cornerstone of personal opportunity.
- Describe the mechanisms and scope of the American public education system. Assess (i) the education programs that exist; (ii) history thereof; (iii) how the programs perform; (iv) what the best expected outcomes could (and should) be.
- Special issues to be discussed, depending on current events: the role of the family unit as a unit of opportunity creation; child welfare & transitional youth programs that promote (or hinder) educational success; measuring teaching and student success; charter schools; and/or the place of for-profit education.



- Examine and discuss the role that social workers do and should play in these various education arenas, from school social worker to creating your own school.

**Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in the Child and Family Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 11, pp 323 – 328, and 333-357). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Becoming Policy Advocates in Education Sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 12, pp 363 – 396). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

**Unit 12: Fiscal System: Paying for Children’s Success: Education and Child Welfare** **DATE**

**Topics:**

- Head Start; public k-12 education; relevant child welfare systems; community and public colleges; private colleges and for-profit colleges.
- Explore the historicity and current standing of the funding for these programs – for example, property tax evolution for K-12; voucher proposals; state support for community colleges.
- Discuss the justness of educational funding, its priorities (which are sometimes geographical and socio-economically-based), and compare it with larger social factors and various populations’ educational outcomes.

**Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2015). Understanding the political economy of the child and family sector. In *Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy: Advancing Social Justice Through Eight Policy Sectors* (chapter 11, pp 328 – 333). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

**Unit 13: Taxation and Government Budget Priorities** **DATE**

**Topics:**

- Basic government budgeting at the federal level, including a review of the sources of federal income and its disbursement, and aspects of tax expenditures and loopholes. State budgets may be used, depending on current events and relevance.
- Describe tax policy at the individual level: how to read your paycheck and understand your taxes. The existence and impact of deductions, OASDI & FICA & Medicare.
- Examine the role between tax policy and social service funding, adequacy and fairness.

- Discuss special issues as per current events, possibly including the role of 501c3 non-profits and 501c4 political groups; government contracting and privatization; and/or an examination of the flow of wealth and resources throughout society.
- Examine whether and the extent to which social workers should focus on tax policy and budgets.

**Required Readings:**

Jansson, Bruce (2001). On the Magnitude of Failed National Priorities. In *The Sixteen-Trillion Dollar Mistake* (chapter 15, pp 349 – 390). New York: Columbia University Press.

Payne, Malcom (2005). Systems and Ecological Perspectives. In *Modern Social Work Theory* (chapter 7, pp 142-160). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Musell, R.M. (2008). *Understanding Government Budgets: A Practical Guide* (chapters 2 and 3). Routledge.

**Unit 14: The Power of Advocacy: American Society Doing Big Things**

**DATE**

**Topics:**

- American society – of which government is only one part – is nimble in reforming certain often-extremely controversial issues in order to increase the security of and provide opportunity to people and communities.
- This class will explore a number of these successful efforts, most of which were led and advanced by different sectors of society working complimentary over time, and accomplished through an interplay of activism, corporate efforts, government regulation, public education, and media coverage.
- Case studies will include civil rights; lowering the smoking rate; increasing car safety; reducing drunk driving; marriage equality; legalized medical marijuana; the creation of the Violence Against Women acts; the creation of PTSD; and/or the recent evolution of criminal justice policy.
- Assess the “new” issues that our society is focusing upon today, which could include according to current events climate change, reducing childhood obesity, gun control and/or the availability of nutritious foods.

**Required Readings:**

Stern, Mark J. (2015). Social Workers’ Role in Social Welfare Policy. In *Engaging Social Welfare: An Introduction to Policy Analysis* (chapter 12, pp. 286 – 302). Boston, MA: Pearson.

**Unit 15: Reforming the Budget: In-Class Presentations**

**DATE**

- This class is a graded in-class series of presentations and defenses of students’ assignment # 3, their team’s recreation of an existing state budget.

### VIII. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the unit. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by email of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students' observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements *in advance* to complete class work which will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.

Please refer to Scampus and to the USC School of Social Work Student Handbook for additional information on attendance policies.

### IX. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](http://sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

### X. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The *Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

## **XI. STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. *Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible.* DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Students from all academic centers (including the Virtual Academic Center) may contact Ed Roth, Director of the DSP office at 213-740-0776 or [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

## **XII. EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION**

**Note:** The following Emergency Response Information pertains to students on campus, but please note its importance should you be on campus for a temporary or extended period. When not on campus: Call the 911 listing in your local community for any emergency.

To receive information, call the main number (213) 740-2711, press #2. “For recorded announcements, events, emergency communications or critical incident information.”

To leave a message, call (213) 740-8311

For additional university information, please call (213) 740-9233

Or visit university website: <http://emergency.usc.edu>

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, please go to the following locations carefully and using stairwells only. Never use elevators in an emergency evacuation.

Students may also sign up for a **USC Trojans Alert** account to receive alerts and emergency notifications on their cell phone, pager, PDA, or e-mail account. Register at <https://trojansalert.usc.edu>.

<b>UNIVERSITY PARK CAMPUS</b>		<b>ACADEMIC CENTERS</b>	
<b>City Center</b>	Front of Building (12th & Olive)	<b>Orange County</b>	Faculty Parking Lot
<b>MRF</b>	Lot B	<b>San Diego</b>	Building Parking Lot
<b>SWC</b>	Lot B	<b>Skirball</b>	Front of Building
<b>VKC</b>	McCarthy Quad		
<b>WPH</b>	McCarthy Quad		

Do not re-enter the building until given the “all clear” by emergency personnel.

## **XIII. STATEMENT ABOUT INCOMPLETES**

The Grade of Incomplete (IN) can be assigned only if there is work not completed because of a documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester. **Students must NOT assume**

**that the instructor will agree to the grade of IN.** Removal of the grade of IN must be instituted by the student and agreed to by the instructor and reported on the official “Incomplete Completion Form.”

#### **XIV. POLICY ON LATE OR MAKE-UP WORK**

Papers are due on the day and time specified. Extensions will be granted only for extenuating circumstances, and the grade may still be reduced. If the paper is late without permission, the grade will be affected. See the specific late policy for this course in the syllabus above.

#### **XV. POLICY ON CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS AND/OR COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

It may be necessary to make some adjustments in the syllabus during the semester in order to respond to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Adjustments that are made will be communicated to students both verbally and in writing.

#### **XVI. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

*Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly*  
[<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp>]

##### **Preamble**

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession’s focus on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. “Clients” is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals’ needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession’s history, are the foundation of social work’s unique purpose and perspective:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

## **XVII. COMPLAINTS**

If you have a complaint or concern about the course or the instructor, please discuss it first with the instructor. If you feel you cannot discuss it with the instructor, contact the Lead Faculty for this course, Sam Mistrano at [mistrano@usc.edu](mailto:mistrano@usc.edu). If you do not receive a satisfactory response or solution, contact your advisor, or Joshua Watson, director of student services, at [jjwatson@usc.edu](mailto:jjwatson@usc.edu).