

Indiana University
School of Social Work

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S561
KANE

SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND SOCIAL SERVICES I

I. Course Rationale

Social Work is practiced in organizations (including entrepreneurial organizations). It requires of its practitioners that they be effective as both professionals and as employees and that they have the ability to manage the tensions associated with a concurrent commitment to multiple roles. Such effectiveness requires knowledge of the larger societal mission of both the profession and the employing organizations; the manifest and latent functions of each; the assumptions on which those functions are predicated; the tensions necessarily generated by concurrent commitments to professional and organizational reference groups; and, the principal societal forces at work in shaping the activities of each and their relationship to each other.

This course is built upon several general propositions:

1. All people, at all times, and in all places, are confronted by needs, problems, and vulnerabilities, which are beyond their individual capacity for solution, and which therefore require collective remedy.
2. All societies make institutional provisions for the meeting or satisfaction of such needs, problems and vulnerabilities. The basic institutions involved in this process are the family, voluntary organizations (including the church), the government, and economic institutions, including the market-place and the occupational social welfare system.
3. Social welfare, broadly conceived, is concerned with the provision of personal benefits to individuals and families.
4. Social work is concerned with the human service needs of people in a pluralistic society. This, coupled with the belief that every individual is a part of the larger system of the dominant society, and the smaller system of his or her physical, social and cultural universe, requires critical consideration of the degree of incongruence between the two systems.

5. Balancing universal or common human needs with the level of institutional provision to meet those needs require understanding of the meaning and quality of being human; the source of moral judgement; and definition of the political system which impact most directly on that balance or imbalance.
6. The goals of specific social welfare policies and programs are multiple, overlapping, and at times conflicting.
7. Social Welfare Policy and program analysis require understanding of analytical frameworks necessary for the examination of social problems and the formulation of social policies and programs for their resolution.

III. Course Objectives

A. Knowledge Objectives

1. Understanding the historical and contemporary interrelationships among social problem conceptualization, goal articulation, program design and service delivery issues, and the ways in which these shape the practice environment in which social workers are employed.
2. Understanding the changing nature of problem conception and social policy initiatives with special reference to distributional data, access to resources, and the special problems of race, class, gender, ethnic and aging populations in society.
3. Knowledge of the characteristics, components, processes, and factors influencing a service delivery system and its functioning.
4. Knowledge of the functions and contributions of social work in connection with social welfare problems, institutions and programs.
5. Knowledge of the basic components and dynamics of the policy making process at the federal, state, and local levels of government, plus the increasing role of the private sector.

B. Valuation Objectives

1. Commitment to social justice, the alleviation of human suffering, prevention of social problems, and appropriate social change, with special reference to the needs of oppressed groups.
2. Appreciation of the influence of values and beliefs in the evolution of social work and social welfare.

C. Application Objectives

1. Utilization of an analytic framework to examine how social problems are defined and social welfare policies, programs and services are developed.

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2. To demonstrate how social values and social norms are central to such definition and development.
3. To draw interconnections and interrelationships between social policy, planning and the political process, and to analyze their impact on social service delivery.
4. To utilize a conceptual framework to understand the institutionalized disadvantages of special populations by virtue of race, economic status or gender, e.g., the Dual Perspective.

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