SOCW 6301: Politics and Social Policy   Dr. Rick Hoefer

Spring 2005
Office: Building D, Room 6
Office Phone: 817-272-3947
Email: rhoefer@uta.edu

Course Statement

Change in social welfare policy is rampant. Welfare reform and its implementation are causing waves throughout the system. It is a truism that social welfare programs are determined by political actors and that social workers are regulated by political decisions. Yet social workers as a group do not have a strong profile in policy-making. This is partly due to a lack of understanding of the political process and partly because of social workers' training as conciliators and mediators rather than political actors.

One of the results of this lack of training for social work students, whether in the Direct Practice or in the Administration and Community Practice track, is that needed changes seem beyond reach as Texas remains near the bottom of most indicators of social welfare provision. Welfare and juvenile justice system reform are being implemented in Texas with little input from individual social workers who know much about the problems of poverty and other social ills.

This class explores the political arena, especially in Texas, and, in particular, the importance of this system to the social work community. Practice theory, modes of intervention and skills necessary for success in the political world will be examined. This information is vital for program administrators, community practitioners and others interested in the policy process. Special attention will be devoted to the role of organized groups active in the political process and how they can affect policy.

This class is about learning to work in political systems; it is not a class representing or advocating one particular political party.

Objectives

By the end of the semester, the student will:
1. Develop a theoretical orientation for political advocacy;
2. Analyze how values and ideology impact social policy;
3. Understand the politics of social policy formulation and adoption;
4. Analyze political and organizational processes used to influence social welfare policy, including those that maintain or reduce oppression and discrimination;
5. Demonstrate skills for influencing policy to promote individual and collective social and economic justice and to combat the causes and effects of institutionalized forms of oppression; and

6. Continue the development of self in the social work process.

Liberal Arts Foundation for the Course

This course builds upon the liberal arts foundation of a bachelor's degree in any field, including social work. Students are assumed to have a working knowledge of American government and democratic processes as practiced in the United States. Students are also expected to be competent (written and oral) communicators in English. Basic computer skills in word processing are assumed. Critical thinking skills are also important and should have been learned in undergraduate coursework.

How this Course Builds Upon the Foundation Social Work Masters Curriculum

This course can be used for credit for either an Administration and Community Practice content area or a Policy content area elective. As such, it builds upon these two areas of social work practice quite extensively. At the same time, important knowledge and skills from direct practice, research and human behavior courses are also used.

This course assumes knowledge of social policy history, and the mission and philosophy of the social work profession, including the past and current extent of individual and collective social justice and institutionalized forms of oppression. Students are also expected to be familiar with social work values and ethics as well as the importance of social policy for proper social work practice. A beginning understanding of the political and organizational processes used to influence social welfare policy should be in place, as well as the ability to assess, plan an intervention and carry out that intervention plan.

This course also builds upon the skills of listening, reflecting and other "therapeutic" skills that are necessary when understanding political views that may differ from one's own. A knowledge of human behavior, including information on race, ethnicity and gender, is very useful when planning intervention. Research skills are vital in understanding what is happening in a policy arena and what can be done to improve the situations that need to be changed.

Required Texts

Brown, Lyle C., et al. (2004): *Practicing Texas Politics: A Brief Survey*, 7th edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin).
Willard Richan, (1996): *Lobbying for Social Change*, 2nd edition (New York: Haworth).

Additional Reading

Information is power. Get into the habit of being informed. Politics and social welfare issues are reported on in daily newspapers and weekly and monthly news magazines and journals of opinion. Students ***should*** read at least one local newspaper (*Ft. Worth Star Telegram* or the *Dallas Morning News*) on a daily basis.

Course Outline

Week	SUBJECT

1. **Introduction to Politics and Social Policy**
    - Online Lecture

2. **Social Work Values and Politics**
    - Richan, Introduction and Chapter 1
    - NASW Code of Ethics
    - Online Lecture

3. **The Political Environment in Texas and the Nation**
    - Brown *et al.*, Chapters 1, 2, 3 and (skim) 9
    - Richan, Appendix
    - Reisch., M. (1997). The political context of social work. In Reisch, M. and Gambrill, E. eds., *Social Work in the 21st Century*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press), pp. 80-92
    - Online Lecture

4. **Beginning Steps in Advocacy: Self Assessment and Planning**
    - Richan, Chapters 3, 4 and 5
    - Online Lecture

5. **Planning in Advocacy Practice**
    - Online Lecture

6. **Next Steps in Advocacy: Making Your Case**
    - Richan, Chapters 6 and 7
    - Online Lecture

7. **Tactics of Advocacy**
    - Richan, Chapters 8, 9 and 10
    - Online Lecture

8. **Legislatures and Legislation**
    - Brown, et al., Ch. 6
    - Online Lecture

9. **Tactics: Using the Media and the Internet**
    - Richan, Chapter 11
    - Online Lecture

10. **Interest Groups and Political Action Committees**
    - Brown, *et al*., Chapter 5

- Hoefer, R. (2000): Human services interest groups in four states. *Journal of Community Practice, 7*(4), 77-94
- Hrebenar, R. (1997). *Interest Group Politics in America, 3rd ed.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. Chapter 7: "Money and Lobbying: The Power of PACs," pp. 191-215
- Online Lecture

11. **Executive Branch Policy-Making**
    - Brown, et al., Chapter 7
    - Hoefer, R. (2000). Making a difference: Human service interest group influence on social welfare program regulations, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 27(3), 21-38
    - Wolpe, B. and Levine, B. (1996). *Lobbying Congress: How the System Works*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, Chapter 6: "Lobbying the Executive," pp. 69-78
    - Online Lecture

12. **Legal Advocacy**
    - Ezell, M. (2001). Legal advocacy. *Advocacy in the Human Services*, Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, pp. 98-114
    - Online Lecture

13. **Elections and Campaigning**
    - Brown, et al., Ch. 4
    - Online Lecture

14. **Reports from Groups (Final Paper due) / Presentations Posted**

15. **Wrap-up and Reflecting on the Course**

You need to use this week to respond to the presentations of the other groups.

Learning Process and Assignments

Students will learn as part of a group process as well as individually. Assignments will require interaction with decision-makers, lobbyists and other actors in the political process. Assignments will also require thoughtful application of information from the readings and lectures.

Assignment 1. Testify to a Legislator, an Aide, or a Legislative or Executive Policy-Making Body and Write a Paper on It

Testifying in front of an elected body, e.g., City Council, School Board, State House or Senate Committee, etc., or directly to a legislator, a legislator's aide, or to an executive branch agency, such as in a rulemaking hearing, is a common advocacy activity that

provides attention to and sways individuals to a certain position. Students will identify a public issue of concern to social workers and testify to an elected or appointed person or legislative body directly responsible for the issue. The student is responsible for providing a copy of the testimony to the instructor and notifying him ahead of time when and where the testimony will take place. After the testimony has taken place, each student will then write a 4-5 page paper indicating what she/he did, referring to the readings to indicate if the information and recommendations found there fit with the student's experience or not. In addition, students will evaluate the effort's effectiveness and indicate what could be done better next time. **This paper must be completed on or before noon of the Monday of the 13th week of class.**

Assignment 2: Class Advocacy Projects

We live in a time of great changes in welfare and other human service policy, with much of the decisionmaking being made at the state and local levels. To explore these issues, students will divide into groups of no more than 4 people. Each group will develop a project that requires them to create an advocacy plan (as described in Richan). **The Advocacy Plan is due at noon on Monday of the 14th week of class**.

The Advocacy Plan should include the following:

  I.   Introduction to the issue being advocated
  II. What are your desired outcomes? What will you do to achieve these goals and objectives? (use an advocacy map as your principal planning tool)
  III. What are your justifications for these goals (provide evidence and anecdotes to support your positions)?
  IV. What are your priorities?
  V.   What are your fallback positions?
  VI. Who are your likely or identified allies and opponents? Why?
  VII. Who are your targets? How do they see the situation?
  VIII. How are you tailoring your information to fit your different targets?
  IX. What are the likely arguments that you will have to counter? How will you do so?
  X.   What is your plan to use media (including electronic media) for your position?
  XI. How will you evaluate your group advocacy efforts?
  XII. Conclusion

By the end of the semester, each group will complete their plan. Each group will also post an *interesting* PowerPoint presentation covering their effort. Students will receive a grade based on the overall quality of the assignment; i.e., everyone in a group will receive the same grade. **This final paper is due no later than Monday noon of the 15th week of class.**

Participation

One of the most important keys to being in an on-line course is participation. Each week you will need to show you are alive and thinking.

Extra Credit: Publish a Letter to the Editor in a Newspaper

Another way of trying to affect opinion is to have a letter to the editor published in your local newspaper. Choose an issue of interest to you related to social work or social welfare policy. Write a letter to your local newspaper, following their guidelines for being printed. This assignment is complete only when a letter of yours is printed in the newspaper. IT MUST BE PUBLISJHED BEFORE noon on Monday of the 16th week of class!!! You must bring, fax or otherwise provide evidence to me of a letter printed in the paper. At that point, you will receive 50 extra points. YOU MAY RECEIVE CREDIT **ONLY ONCE** FOR A TOTAL OF 50 POINTS. Remember, your friends, relatives and countless strangers will be reading this, so make sure it is a quality product.

NOTE: There are no other ways to get credit or points for the class than those described above. If your grade is not what you want it to be, or you "need a B" or "need an A" my only suggestion is to work WITH me through the *__entire__* semester to reach your goal or satisfy your academic need. Because much of your grade is dependent on a group effort, you will need to plan carefully, hold your colleagues responsible for their share of the work, and be proactive.

Grading

Advocacy Plan	400 pts
Testimony paper	400 pts
Participation	200 pts
TOTAL	1,000 pts

Note: The process of grading involves the application of both subjective and objective components. Quality is an issue that involves the professor's professional judgment regarding how well the assignment has been completed. It is not a matter that can, in and of itself, be appealed.

Academic Dishonesty

It is the philosophy of the University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22.)

Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodation Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112-The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. With the passage of the federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens..

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "*reasonable accommodation*" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with **informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.**

Dropping the Class

If you chose to drop the class, it is your responsibility to complete the paperwork according to the University's schedule. Not doing so may result in a failing grade.

Student Retention

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

Some Additional Resources on Social Work and Political Action

Albert, R. (1983): Social work advocacy in the regulatory process. *Social Casework*, October, 473-481.

Amidei, N. (1987): The new activism picks up steam. *Public Welfare*, 45(3), 21-26.

Barbaro, F. (1978). Social welfare interest groups: An underutilized resource. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 5*(3), 418-434.

Brager, G. A. (1968): Advocacy and political behavior. *Social Work*, April, 5-15.

Ezell, M. (1994): Advocacy practice of social workers. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, January, 36-46.

Ezell, M. (1991): Administrators as advocates. *Administration in Social Work*, 15(4), 1-18.

Ginsberg, L. (1988): Social workers and politics: Lessons from practice," *Social Work*, 245-247.

Goodwin, M., Easley, J., Hoefer, R. & Colby, I. (1993): Analysis of the 1993 Texas legislature: A social work report card. Paper presented at the Texas National Association of Social Workers Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX, November.

Greene, R. & Knee, R. (1996). Shaping the policy practice agenda of social work in the field of aging. *Social Work, 41*(5), 553-560.

Heffernan, J. (1964). Political activity and social work executives. *Social Work, 9*(2), 18-23.

Hoefer, R. (2002). Political advocacy in the 1980s: Comparing human services and defense interest groups. *Social Policy Journal, 1*(1), 99-112.

Hoefer, R. (2001). Highly effective human services interest groups: Seven key practices. *Journal of Community Practice, 9*(3), 1-13.

Hoefer, R. (2000). Making a difference: Human service interest group influence on social welfare program regulations. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 27(3), 21-38.

Hoefer, R. (2000). Human services interest groups in four states: Lessons for effective advocacy, *Journal of Community Practice* 7(4), 77-94.

Hoefer, R. (1999). Protection, prizes or patrons? Explaining the origins and maintenance of human services interest groups. *Journal of Sociology* and *Social Welfare*, 26(4), 115-136.

Hoefer, R. (1999). The social work and politics initiative: A model for increasing political content in social work education. *Journal of Community Practice, 6*(3), 71-87.

Howard, D., (1954). Social work and social reform. In C. Kasius, ed., *New Directions in Social Work*, (New York: Harper).

Kedrowski, K. (1998). A woman's place is in the house: Campaigning for Congress in the feminist era. *Women & Politics, 19*, 103+.

Lynch, R. S. & Mitchell, J. (1995). Justice system advocacy: A must for NASW and the social work community. *Social Work, 40*(1), 9-12.

M.,A., (1981). Social workers and politics. *Social Work*, 267-268.

Mahaffey, M. (1987): Political action in social work. In *Encyclopedia of Social Work*, 18th Edition, (Silver Springs, MD: NASW), 351-366.

Mahaffey, M. & Hanks, J. W. (1982): *Practical politics: Social work and political responsibility*, (Silver Spring, MD: National Association of Social Workers).

Mary, N., Ellano, C. & Newell, J. (1993): Political activism in social work: A study of social work educators. In Terry Mizrahi and John Morrison, eds., *Community Organization and Social Administration*, (New York: Haworth), 203-223.

Mathews, G. (1982). Social workers and political influence. *Social Service Review*, December, 616-628.

Mickelson, J. S. (1995) Advocacy. In *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (Vol. 1, pp. 95-100). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Pawlak, E. J. & Flynn, J. P.(1990). Executive directors' political activities. *Social Work, 35*(4), 307-312.

Poertner, J. & Petr, C. (1990). Understanding and influencing policy implementation: A model for social work education. Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council for Social Work Education, Reno, NV, March.

Poindexter, C. (1999). Promises in the plague: Passage of the Ryan White comprehensive AIDS resources emergency act as a case study for legislative action. *Health and Social Work, 24*(1), 34-41.

Reeser, L.C. & Epstein, I. (1987). Social workers' attitudes toward poverty and social action: 1968-1984," *Social Service Review, 61*(4), 610-622.

Reisch, M. (1986). From cause to case and back again: The reemergence of advocacy in social work. *The Urban and Social Change Review, 19*, 20-24.

Reisch, M. (1990). Organizational structure and client advocacy: Lessons from the 1980s. *Social Work, 35*(1), 73-74.

Ribicoff, A. (1962). Politics and social workers. *Social Work*, April, 3-6.

Robey, J. S. (1980). Lobbying: Let the buyer beware. *Journal of Extension*, March/April, pp. 19-24.

Salcido, R. M. (1984). Social work practice in political campaigns. *Social Work, 29*, 189-191.

Sosin, M. & Caulum, S. (1989). Advocacy: A conceptualization for social work practice. In B. R. Compton & B. Galaway, eds. *Social Work Processes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Thompson, J. J. (1994). Social workers and politics: Beyond the Hatch Act. *Social Work*, *39*(4), 457-465.

Weismiller, T., & D. Dempsey. (1991): *Electoral politics and government relations: Revisioning political education in social work*, unpublished manuscript available from NASW, 750 First Street, NE, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20002.

Wolk, J. L. (1996). Political activity in social work: A theoretical model of motivation. *International Social Work, 39*, 443-455.

General References Used for this Course

Davidson, R. & Oleszek, W. (2004). *Congress and Its Members*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Ezell, M. (2001). *Advocacy in the Human Services*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Haynes, K. & Mickelson, J. (2000). *Affecting Change. Social Workers in the Political Arena*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Kerwin, C. (2003). *Rulemaking: How Government Agencies Write Law and Make Policy, 3rd ed*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Richan, W. (1996). *Lobbying for Social Change, 2nd ed*. New York: Haworth Press.

Rubin, B. (1997). *A Citizen's Guide to Politics in America: How the System Works and How to Work the System*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Schneider, R. & Lester, L. (2001). *Social Work Advocacy: A New Framework for Action*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Wolpe, B. & Levine, B. (1996). *Lobbying Congress: How the System Works, 2nd ed*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.