



University of Central Florida
School of Social Work

SOW 6246-0001 Policy Analysis and Social Change

Professor:	Stanley Ramos, MSW	Term: Spring 2009
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Course Description: Study of urban problems, policies, and planning from the perspective of their impact on individuals and families.

This course builds on the foundation of understanding of the American social welfare system (SOW 5235), human behavior and social systems (SOW 5106), and generalist and clinical specialist practice (SOW 5106 and SOW 5306). Recognizing the inseparable link between community-based clinical and policy practice is fundamental in this course.

The purpose of the course is for students to develop knowledge and skill in small-scale policy practice so they can solve social problems that affect social stress and social functioning of clients, improve service responses to client populations, and promote economic and social justice. Students will gain analytic, process, and communication skills that have practical application for changing policies and programs in agency, community, or legislative settings. These skills are needed to inform, persuade, educate, and mobilize people to solve social problems and to translate values and policy goals into action.

The course provides a value-analytic approach to policy analysis and program development. It is grounded in social work theory, values, and first principles emphasizing membership, democratic participation, shared responsibility, and empowerment. A "bottom up" approach to social policy and program change for direct service professionals engaged in community-based clinical practice is also emphasized in the course.

Course Objectives: On completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking, empirical findings, and content from previous courses in social welfare policy, practice, and human behavior to community problems and social service approaches, especially as they relate to populations at risk and diversity.
2. Identify the linkages between clinical and policy practice as well as the roles of professionals as shapers and implementers of social policy in community-based clinical practice.
3. Apply social work membership theory and principles of democracy to social problem analysis and to methods of agency, community, and social change.
4. Distinguish between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches to policy planning and formulation.
5. Conduct small-scale policy analysis and policy hearings that have practical application in agency, community, or legislative settings. Translate values and policy goals into programs of action, increases social support, and improves client social functioning.
6. Utilize a problem-solving model for mobilizing resources to solve social problems and to promote policy change and social justice from the "bottom up": from agency, to community, to regulatory and legislative settings.

7. Perform tasks for effective communication of policy analyses to community people needing to be informed, persuaded, or educated about a social problem.

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity: I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

Scholarship: I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

Community: I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

Creativity: I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

Excellence: I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with School of Social Work Student Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students. All polices included in these handbooks apply to this class.

Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

Cell phones, pagers and recorders

- Students are asked to turn off cell phones and beepers during class sessions.
- Permission to audiotape a class meeting(s) must be obtained from the instructor in advance.
- While the use of laptops is convenient for students to take class notes, it is expected that students WILL NOT engage in other laptop activities during class time that may include: internet activities, reading and responding to email, balancing a checkbook, etc. If this should occur, the instructor reserves the right to request that the student not use a laptop during class.

Classroom Decorum

- Side conversations are discouraged because they distract the class.
- The instructor expects students to respect the culture, values, beliefs and rights of their classmates. During class sessions, alternate points of view are encouraged and should be received by others with respect. Students should feel free to express their opinions and to refer to relevant personal situations without fear of disapproval or disrespect; however, the classroom is not the place where students should indulge in personal venting or support seeking.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class (i.e., complete readings and other assignments *prior* to class). Make-up exams are not given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild illness (such as a cold), and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme. The instructor reserves the option to provide a make up exam in hers or his absence.

Students who miss three (3) or more absences regardless of the reason may have their final grade lowered by one letter grade. The only exception to this is if the student has a **documented** extraordinary circumstance (student hospitalization; severe illness; death in the family; car accident) preventing the student from coming to class. In that case, the student must present written documentation to the instructor.

Attendance during Finals Week: It is University policy that all classes **MUST** meet during the scheduled final exam session.

Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing. *Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments.*

All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage may be returned with out a grade. When references are required, they must be in the APA documentation style.

Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the class period or delivered to the instructor's mailbox *before class starts on the due date*. *It is the student's responsibility to see to it that her or his assignment is stamped with the date by the social work staff member who then places the assignment in the instructor's mailbox.* No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each day that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

Incomplete Grades

An “Incomplete” is only recorded in exceptional circumstances and in keeping with the School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the due date extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment may result in an "F" for that assignment and may also lead to an "F" for the entire course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.) It is assumed that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com

The instructor reserves the option to use (turnitin.com); an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. You will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit: <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Disability Access Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the instructor. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the instructor to request them.

Required Texts:

1. Jansson, B. (2003). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson-Brooks/Cole.
2. Gilbert, N., & Terrell P. (2005), *Dimensions of social welfare policy* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Required Readings: Students are encouraged to bring news items related to current social welfare policies and issues in the community and in state and federal government.

Course Policies: See the **School of Social Work Student Handbook** and **The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students**.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading: Each student brings many interests, talents, and learning needs to this class experience. As adult learners, students **are expected** to keep up with reading assignments, attend class, and participate in class discussions.

Attendance is expected. More than 3 absences results in a loss of 5 grade points per absence.

Late assignments – Deduction of 1 full letter grade per week past assigned due date.

The final course grade is computed as follows:

ASSIGNMENTS	Grading Scheme	Date
Letter to a Legislator	15	Anytime between week 5& 10
Letter to the Editor	15	Same as above assignment
Advocacy Portfolio	45 (group grade)	Week 12
Personal Reflection Paper	25	Week 14
Total		

Grading Scheme

A 94>; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F below 60

DETAILS OF THE ASSIGNMENTS

1a. Letter to a State or National Legislator - During this semester you should read and monitor human service/social welfare issues (homelessness, child welfare, discrimination, domestic and community violence, etc.) in the media. Pick an issue and write a letter of concern, support or opposition to your state or national representative or senator. You will read your letter in class and you must mail it. Any response you receive should also be shared with the class. **You should emphasize the fact that you are writing as a PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER.**

AND

1b. Letter to the Editor – Follow the same guidelines as the above assignment but pick a different issue and write an opinion/editorial to the editor of the Orlando Sentinel. You will read your op/ed letter to the class and you must mail it. We will look for you “in print”. **You should emphasize the fact that you are writing as a PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER.**

2. Advocacy Portfolio (3 person advocacy teams) (45% of course grade)

Important policy decisions are increasingly being made at the state and local levels. Social workers must become skilled at navigating the local, county, and state legislature as they advocate for policies consistent with social work values and concerns. In teams of three, students will identify and promote (a) an original idea for a bill to be introduced in the Florida Legislature; (b) a policy issue likely to come before the Florida Legislature in its 2007 session; (c) proposal to a local or county government to address a social issue; and (d) a local or county level policy issue that needs to be addressed. Possible issues include:

Ideas for State Level	<u>Ideas for County and Local Level</u>
Improving conditions in Florida's assisted living facilities	<u>Advocating for development or services and housing for the homeless</u>
Title Protection Professional Social Worker Identification	<u>Advocating for affordable housing for low and middle income citizens</u>

Ideas for State Level	<u>Ideas for County and Local Level</u>
Requiring discharge planning for juvenile offenders re-entering the community	<u>Advocating for appropriate provision of services in response to a large non-English speaking population</u>
Permitting domestic partners to be covered by insurance policies	<u>Advocating for youth programming that provides an alternative to gang involvement and delinquency</u>
Requiring the collection of data on racial profiling in Florida	Advocating for caregiver support services for those caring for persons with long-term chronic diseases
Fending off efforts to prohibit " living wage " laws in local Florida jurisdictions	Advocating to address problems related to the aging population
Restoring the voting rights of former felons	Advocating for provision of child welfare services
Identify an alternative issue (must be pre-approved by the instructor)	Identify an alternative issue (must be pre-approved by the instructor)
Visit NASW National at www.naswdc.org	

Students will participate in the local, county, or state legislative process as appropriate (including conducting at least 3 face-to-face meetings with legislators, legislative staff, county commissioners, county mayor, city commissioners, city mayor, and/or advocates) and each team will submit a **portfolio** that includes the following:

I. Background Analysis

State Legislature	Local or County Government
A. Description of the underlying problem	A. Description of the underlying problem
B. Literature review	B. Literature review
C. Legislative history of the issue in Florida	C. History of the issue
D. Initiatives in other states and countries	D. Initiatives in Florida, other states and countries
E. Summary and status of the bill	E. Overall strategy (plan of action)
F. Analysis of the playing field include all stakeholders (both	F. Analysis of the playing field include all stakeholders (both

proponents/opponents)	proponents/opponents)
G. Arguments pro and con	G. Arguments pro and con
	H. Recommendations

II. Overall Strategy

- A.** If you were in charge of developing an overall strategy, what would it look like? Examine each of the following elements, using the questions as your guide:
1. *Identify* the linkages between clinical and policy practice as well as the roles of professionals as shapers and implements of social policy and community-based clinical practice.
 2. *Testifying*: Would it be important to testify on this issue? Why or why not? If so, what would you hope to gain? Whom would you choose to deliver the testimony? Why? Who would you be trying to influence? What would you seek to get across?
 3. *Coalition building*: Would it be important to work in coalition? Why or why not? Who would you seek to partner with? Why? What would you have the coalition do? • *Face-to face lobbying*: How important would fact-to-face lobbying be? Who should actually make these visits? Why? Whom would you target? Why? Which arguments would be most effective? How would you frame them? What kinds of written tools would be most helpful? What role, if any, do you see for clients/consumers in your lobbying effort? Explain. Describe your Social Work Lobby Day experiences in accomplishing your objectives.
 4. *Field organizing*: Is an active field presence important? Why or why not? If so, whom would you mobilize? How? With what message? What would you ask them to do?
 5. *Media campaign*: Would you use the media as part of your action campaign? Why or why not? What media resources would you use? What message would you seek to convey? Who would your audience be? How would you coordinate this effort with other parts of your legislative campaign?

III. Action Taken

- A.** Describe your teams' advocacy efforts? What was your objective? Whom did you target to get your issue on the public agenda? With whom did you collaborate? Who were you able to co-opt? What was your rationale?
- B.** With which elected officials, staff, and/or advocates did you meet? How many meetings did you have with others? What was the purpose of each meeting? Did the meetings move you toward your objective?
- C.** Which single action or element stands out as the most important? Explain your reasons for selecting those actions.
- D.** How does membership theory and principles of democracy to social problem analysis fit with your approach to this issue? How does membership theory and

principles of democracy fit with the methods you used for social change at the macro, mezzo, and micro level?

E. Draft the following communication tools. For each one, identify your intended audience and explain what you would hope to achieve.

1. Testimony
2. Fact Sheet
3. Position Paper (with specific recommendations and alternatives)
4. Field Alert
5. Letter to the Editor, Feature Article, Op-ed Piece, or Press Release
6. Letter to a Legislator
7. Public Service Announcement (for TV or radio)

F. Add any additional materials that document or support your team's experience with legislative advocacy.

3. Personal Reflection Paper (25% of course grade)

Each individual student will also submit a **personal reflection**, responding to the following questions:

1. **What did you learn**, substantively, **about your topic**? What most surprised you? Were you genuinely moved to action by anything you found out?
2. What did you learn about the state legislative **process**? How did your experience compare to what you learned from readings/lectures? What surprised you? What wisdom have you accumulated that you can carry into future advocacy efforts?
3. What did you learn **about yourself** as an advocate? What did you learn about yourself as a social worker? What skills are you good at performing? What do you need to learn?
4. How did you feel about your contacts with **elected officials, staff, and/or advocates**? Were you satisfied with your own performance? How did these contacts shape your perception of the policy process?
5. What was your **team experience like**? What lessons/observations can you take away about working in a task group? How might you use that learning in the future?
6. Provide examples of "top down" and "bottom up" approaches to planning and formulation. Discuss how you used one or both of these approaches in your portfolio project.

Course Outline

Unit 1: THE NATURE OF POLICY PRACTICE AND POLICY ADVOCACY

Week 1 **Overview of course, course requirements, student expectations and readings.**

Week 2 and 3 **Policy as a Rational Choice**

- Why social workers must engage in policy advocacy
- Ethical, political and analytical rationale for policy practice

Required Readings:

- Jansson text: Ch. 1 Joining a tradition of social reform; Ch. 2 Articulating four rationales for participating for policy advocacy
- Gilbert and Terrell text: Ch. 1 The Field of social welfare policy; Ch. 2 The modern welfare state; Ch. 4: The basis of social allocations.

Week 4 and 5 **Skills, Task and Action in Social Policy**

- Skills and tasks for policy practice (analytical, political, interactional, and value changing and value-changing skills)
- Differences between skills and tasks

Required Readings

- Jansson text. Ch. 3 Obtaining skills and competence for policy advocacy; Ch 4 Understanding the ecology of policy in governmental, electoral, community and agency settings.
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 3 A framework for social welfare policy analysis.

Unit 2: PUTTING POLICY ADVOCACY PRACTICE INTO ACTION

Week 6 **Building a Policy Agenda and Social Problem Analysis**

- The agenda building process and stages of agenda building
- Using data, quantitative and qualitative research to capture the nature of the problem
- Clarifying the complex nature of social problems
- Identifying determinants to projects program effectiveness

Required Readings:

- Jansson, text. Ch 5 Committing to an Issue: Building agenda, Ch. 6 Committing to a solution: Analyzing problems
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 5 The nature of social provision

Week 7 **Policy Options and Proposals**

- The scope of policy options – establishing a mission, designing the structure of service, defining services rationing scarce resources,
- Policy proposal development – Agency or legislative
- Identifying options for problem solving
- Constructing a written policy proposal
- Making persuasive presentations
- **Required readings:**
- Jansson text. Ch. 7 Developing policy proposals; Ch 8 Presenting and defending policy proposals
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 6 The design of the delivery system

Unit 3: POLICY ADVOCACY WITHIN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Week 9 and 10 **Understanding “Power” and Politics and Knowing How to Use It**

- Definitions of “power” and politics
- The nature of power
- Power resources, power process and indirect power
- Establishing personal credibility
- Networking
- Problems of “out groups” in using power
- Task groups and coalitions

Required Reading:

- Jansson text. Ch. 9 Developing and using power.
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 7 The mode of finance: Source of funds

Weeks 11 & 12 **Developing Political Strategy and Taking Political Action**

- Creating political strategies in agencies, communities, and legislative settings
- Evaluating the strength of support and opposition
- Contextual factors
- Situational factors
- Steps in formulating and evaluating political strategies
- Construction of a policy or program proposal
- Who presents?
- Essential characteristics of credible policy presentations
- Different formats of policy presentations
- Delivery of an effective oral testimony
- How to develop a position paper, memorandum, policy letter, or news release
- Testifying before a legislative committee
- Writing a letter to a legislator
- Writing a letter to a newspaper

Required Reading:

- Jansson text. Ch. 10 Developing political strategy, Ch. 11 Putting political strategy into action, Ch. 12 Engaging in ballot-based policy advocacy
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 8 The mode of finance: Systems of transfer.

Unit 4 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Week 13 and 14 **Framework for Implementing Policy and Assessing Policy Implementation**

- The implementing organization: Structure and staff
- The implementation process
- Policy assessment process
- Differentiating between assessing and analyzing policy and policy assessment and policy debates
- Program evaluation/outcome (Process and Outcome)

Required Reading

- Jansson text. Ch. 13 Troubleshooting policies, Ch 14 Assessing policies
- Gilbert and Terrell text. Ch. 9 Who plans? Choices in the process of policy formulation