



COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCW 7397/22799 – Social Policy Advocacy
(Previous title: Affecting Social Policy)

TIME: Thursdays 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. **ROOM:** 110K

FACULTY: Suzanne Pritzker, Ph.D. **OFFICE HOURS:** Thursdays 11:00 – 1:00 p.m.
and by appointment (SW 415)

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I. Course

A. Description

Provides an understanding of political systems and teaches the skills to affect policy in the legislative as well as administrative arenas.

B. Purpose

This course provides students with an understanding of the political processes and systems that affect their practice. The course examines theory and skills effective in influencing, altering, and monitoring social policy.

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply analytical methods to understand the dimensions of power and decision-making at the community, state and national levels;
2. Develop strategies to enhance social and economic justice within organizational and political systems especially as they affect women, minorities of color, gay and lesbian persons, those most economically disadvantaged, as well as strategies to address social class;
3. Identify professional values and ethical positions within, as well as between systems, which may appear to be incompatible with political roles and strategies and develop skills to bridge these incompatibilities in order to affect change;
4. Identify and utilize methods and skills, which develop and sustain inter-organizational networks;

5. Demonstrate advocacy skills, such as testifying, lobbying, and providing staff support for public interest, constituency and/or grassroots community groups;
6. Identify institutional and community practices that disempower, and develop strategies to challenge them;
7. Demonstrate how to share empowerment theory and practice with constituencies who are unfamiliar or inclined to oppose such; and
8. Continue the development of the professional use-of-self.

III. Course Structure

Content areas addressed in this class include:

1. Understanding power and politics in policy processes;
2. Developing an advocacy agenda;
3. Implementing and evaluating advocacy strategies and tactics.

Class formats will vary from session to session, depending on session content. Interactive lectures and discussion will be the primary format, requiring active participation and engagement. Class instruction will also include in-class exercises, guest speakers, peer-led discussions, and field trip(s). Students are expected to complete all readings as assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them.

The professor reserves the right to alter readings, course topics, and assignments as needed to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints.

IV. Readings

Required readings are listed in this syllabus along with the course schedule. Assigned readings are available on Blackboard or distributed to students by the professor. Readings are selected from a diverse array of scholars and activists, and have been purposefully selected to strengthen students' critical thinking and encourage healthy classroom debate. It is not expected that students (or the professor) will agree with all perspectives presented.

To stay abreast of current social policy issues, students are encouraged to follow at least one of the following news sources daily: The Houston Chronicle, The Washington Post, The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, BBC News, or National Public Radio.

All students are expected to sign up for legislative alerts related to the 2011

session of the Texas Legislature from at least one advocacy organization (e.g., Children at Risk, Mental Health America of Greater Houston, One Voice Texas).

Students are encouraged to share articles, video clips, etc. that complement our class discussions either by bringing them to class or posting them on Blackboard.

V. Course Requirements

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

- 1) **Class participation and preparedness** – 10 points
- 2) **Advocacy critique** – 10 points (DUE: TBD)
- 3) **Advocacy strategy and implementation** – 50 points total
 - a. Advocacy strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart (10 points)
DUE: 2/25, by 5:00 p.m.
 - b. Revised strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart (15 points)
DUE: 4/22, by 5:00 p.m.
 - c. Advocacy tools (20 points)
DUE: 4/22, by 5:00 p.m.
 - d. Evidence of implementation of at least one tool (5 points, with up to 3 additional extra credit points)
DUE: 5/2, by 5:00 p.m.
 - e. ISP State Policy Contest submission
DUE: 5/2, by 5:00 p.m.
- 4) **Advocacy event, community meeting, or campaign volunteering** – 10 points (DUE: 4/28, in class)
- 5) **Reflective essay** – 20 points (DUE: 4/29, by 5:00 p.m.)

Detail about these assignments is provided in an attachment to this syllabus. All assignments are due by the dates and times specified above. Late submissions will be accepted; however, ***the grade value will be reduced by 10% for each day late***, including turning an assignment after the time deadline on the day it is due.

VI. Evaluation and Grading

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the College:

| | | | |
|------|-----------------------|------|-----------|
| A = | 96-100% of the points | C+ = | 76-79.9% |
| A- = | 92-95.9% | C = | 72-75.9% |
| B+ = | 88-91.9% | C- = | 68-71.9% |
| B = | 84-87.9% | D = | 64-67.9% |
| B- = | 80-83.9% | F = | Below 64% |

VII. Policy on grades of I (Incomplete)

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work complete in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

VIII. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced

using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

IX. Course Schedule and Assignments

Session 1. January 20 *Course overview/defining social policy advocacy*

Figueira-McDonough, J. (1993). Policy practice: The neglected side of social work intervention. *Social Work*, 38, 2, 179-188.

Selected political social worker biographies

Session 2. January 27 *Power*

Blundo, R.G., Mele, C., Hairston, R. & Watson, J. (1999). The internet and demystifying power differentials: A few women online and the housing authority. *Journal of Community Practice*, 6, 2, 11-26.

Frantzich, S.E. (2008). Power letter writing: Women in the military academies. In *Citizen Democracy: Political Activism in a Cynical Age* (People, Passions, & Power), pp. 128-136.

Staples, L. (1984). Power to the People. In *Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing*, pp. 1-14.

Session 3. February 3 *Social policy advocacy in Texas*

TBD: Citizen's Guide to the Guide to the Texas Legislature OR The Secretary of the Senate. (2007). *Citizen Handbook: How the Texas Legislature Works*.

Review and follow links provided at the following websites:

1. <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/resources/FollowABill.aspx>
2. www.houstontx.gov/council/index.html
3. www.judgeemmett.org/faqs.asp (Questions 1-6, 9-10)

Session 4. February 10 *Developing an advocacy agenda: identifying issues, goals, targets*

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2001). Choosing an issue. In *Organizing for Social Change*, pp. 22-29

Hofer, R. (2006). Understanding the issue. In *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*, pp. 52-74.

Sen, R. (2003). Picking the good fight. In *Stir it Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*, pp. 48-78.

Session 5. February 17 *Developing an advocacy agenda: selecting strategies and tactics*

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2001). Developing a strategy. In *Organizing for Social Change*, pp. 30-48.

Richan (2006). Setting an action agenda. In *Lobbying for Social Change*, Chapter 2.

Session 6. February 24 *Use of self in policy advocacy*

Lavine, D.S. (2002). The necessity of properly identifying your audience and tailoring your arguments to its needs. In *Cardinal Rules of Advocacy: Understanding and Mastering Fundamental Principles of Persuasion*, pp. 5-30.

Lens, V. (2005). Advocacy and argumentation in the public arena: A guide for social workers. *Social Work*,

50, 3, 231-238.

SPIN Project. (2003). Framing and messaging. In *Winning Wages: A Media Kit for Successful Living Wage Strategies*, only pp. 25-43.

ADVOCACY STRATEGY SUMMARY & ADVOCACY PLANNING CHART DUE 2/25/11 BY 5:00 P.M.

Session 7. March 3

Strategies and tactics: lobbying and influencing legislation and regulation

Haynes, K. & Mickelson, J. (2010). Influence through lobbying. In *Affecting Change: Social Workers in the Political Arena*, pp. 108-127.

Hoefler, R. (2006). Ongoing monitoring. In *Advocacy Practice for Social Justice*, pp. 157-176.

Richan (2006). Understanding policymakers. In *Lobbying for Social Change*, pp. 105-130.

Sharwell, G. (1982). How to testify before a legislative committee. In Mahaffey & Hanks, *Practical Politics: Social Work and Political Responsibility*, pp. 85-98.

Date TBD

TRIP TO AUSTIN

Session 8. March 10

Strategies and tactics: Working with media

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2001). Using the media. In *Organizing for Social Change*, pp. 156-172

Center for Community Change (1997). *How to Tell and Sell Your Story: A Guide to Developing Effective Messages and Good Stories About Your Work*. (Skim Parts 1 & 2)

Wallack, L., Woodruff, K., Dorfman, L. & Diaz, I. (1999). Thinking like an advocate. In *News for a Change: An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Media*, pp. 53-69.

March 17.

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

- Session 9. March 24 *Strategies and tactics: Grassroots activism and raising public awareness*
- Kaminstein, D.S. (1995). A resource mobilization analysis of a failed protest. *Journal of Community Practice, 2, 2, 5-32.*
- Sacks, O. (1988). The revolution of the deaf. *New York Review of Books, 35, 9, 23-28.*
- SPIN Project. (2003). Framing and messaging. In *Winning Wages: A Media kit for Successful Living Wage Strategies, only* pp. 44-66.
- Session 10. March 31 NO CLASS
- Session 11. April 7 *Strategies and tactics: Influencing electoral politics*
- Haynes, K. & Mickelson, J. (2010). The campaign. In *Affecting Change: Social Workers in the Political Arena*, pp. 156-174.
- Haynes, K. & Mickelson, J. (2010). Social Workers as politicians. In *Affecting Change: Social Workers in the Political Arena*, pp. 175-192.
- Jansson, B. (2003). Engaging in ballot-based policy advocacy. *Becoming an Effective Policy Advocate*, pp. 375-406
- Session 12. April 14 *Coalition-building and empowerment*
- Arnstein, S.R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *American Institute of Planners Journal, 69, 216-224.*
- Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2001). Building and joining coalitions. *Organizing for Social Change*, pp. 100-109
- Deegan, P. (1992). The Independent Living Movement and people with psychiatric disabilities: Taking back control over our own lives. *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal, 15, 3, 3-20.*

Mizrahi, T. & Rosenthal, B. (2001). Complexities of coalition building: Leaders' successes, strategies, struggles, and solutions. *Social Work, 46*, 1, 63-79.

Session 13. April 21

Laws and ethics of policy advocacy

Ezell, M. (2001). The ethics of advocacy. In *Advocacy in the Human Services*, pp. 37-50.

Raffa, T. (2000). Advocacy and lobbying without fear: What is allowed within a 501(c)3 charitable organization? *Nonprofit Quarterly, 7*, 2, 44-47

REVISED STRATEGY SUMMARY & ADVOCACY PLANNING CHART; ADVOCACY TOOLS DUE 4/22/11 BY 5:00 P.M.

Session 14. April 28

Wrap-up/Evaluating policy advocacy

Belton, K.B. (2001). Assessing your advocacy efforts. *Association Management, 53*, 2, 49-52.

McNutt, J. (2010). Is social advocacy worth the cost? Issues & barriers to an economic analysis of social work political practice. *Research on Social Work Practice, 1-7*.

Selections TBD from *The evaluation exchange, 13*, 11.

ADVOCACY EVENT, COMMUNITY MEETING, OR CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEERING DUE 4/28/11

CRITICAL ESSAY DUE 4/29/11 by 5 p.m.

EVIDENCE OF ADVOCACY TOOL IMPLEMENTATION; ISP STATE POLICY SUBMISSION DUE 5/2/11 by 5 p.m.

X. Americans with Disabilities Statement:

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation

from the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

XI. Addenda:

Consultation. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 of this syllabus and are posted outside of my office door (#415). Other times can be arranged by appointment – please contact me by email (spritzker@uh.edu) to schedule alternative appointment times. I encourage students to meet with me to discuss assignment topics, questions related to course content, or other topics that arise as a result of course content, assignments, and discussions.

Course expectations. *Regular, on-time attendance is mandatory; any more than one absence will be reflected in your class participation grade.* If you cannot attend class, you are expected to inform me in advance. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact fellow students to obtain missed information.

Blackboard. The course information and readings are on the Blackboard site for this course. Please use Blackboard for submitting assignments and following course announcements. Students are encouraged to post and discuss links or articles relevant to course content on the discussion board in order to strengthen the course learning environment.

Electronic Devices. You are expected to conduct yourself as a professional in this class. Cell phones should be turned off before class, and no laptops should be utilized during class sessions, except as permitted by the professor.

Course Assignments

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

1) Participation and preparedness – 10 points.

Active class participation is expected, and is necessary for optimal student learning. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the weekly readings, as well as broader themes and/or current events that arise around each session's topic. Debate and discussion of different perspectives is expected; however, students are expected to demonstrate respectful conduct towards one another.

Your participation will be assessed using the following criteria:

- supporting flow of discussion (sharing appropriate and relevant content, reading and integrating weekly readings, integrating relevant field experiences, and furthering classroom discussion of session topics);
- active listening; and

- being respectful in comments and action (including regular attendance and arriving on time). Points will be deducted for more than one absence or multiple late arrivals.

2) Advocacy critique – 10 points.

You are expected to identify and share with the class a current media item (e.g., news article, tv clip, radio show excerpt, blog post, commercial) describing a citizen effort to affect social policy. Audio/video clips must be less than 5 minutes long.

You are expected to bring the media item to class and present it by:

- a) summarizing the advocacy effort that has taken place,
- b) describing:
 - a. the target of the advocacy effort,
 - b. the goals of the effort, and
 - c. the strategies and tactics used;
- c) leading a class discussion, in which the student guides the class in:
 - a. critically assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the advocacy effort, and
 - b. discussing other strategies or tactics that may have been more effective; and
- d) wrapping up the discussion with the student's final observations.

The presentation and discussion should be 20-30 minutes long, and cannot exceed 30 minutes.

DUE: TBD (A sign-up sheet will be distributed during the first session.)

3) Advocacy strategy and implementation – 50 points

An important skill for professional social workers is the ability to effectively engage in advocacy. This assignment offers students a choice between one of two alternatives for developing and implementing advocacy skills:

- 1) The **Advocacy tools** assignment must be completed individually. It provides students an opportunity to design an advocacy effort around a domestic (in the U.S.) policy issue at either the local, state, or national level, and must be completed individually.

OR

- 2) The **ISP State Policy Contest** assignment can be completed individually or in small groups to implement an effort to affect state-level policy. This assignment requires completion of a serious, committed advocacy effort, and students must submit a summary of their effort to the ISP State Policy Contest (guidelines to be distributed in class).

| Due Date | Points | Assignment | |
|---|--------|---|-------------------------------------|
| | | Advocacy tools | ISP State Policy Contest |
| February 25, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. (Session 6), <i>or before you begin your advocacy effort, whichever comes first</i> | 10 | Advocacy strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart | |
| Sessions 7 - 11 | | Advocacy tool share | |
| April 22, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. (Session 14) | 15 | Revised strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart | |
| | 20 | 3 Advocacy tools | Advocacy tools |
| May 2, 2011, by 5:00 p.m. | 5 | Evidence of implementation of at least one tool | |
| | | | ISP State Policy Contest submission |

Advocacy strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart: In 2-3 pages, you are expected to:

- a) Using references, identify and describe the policy problem and issue you will be addressing in this assignment and why;
- b) Make a clear statement of your position and how your position will impact practice, clients' lives, and social and economic justice;
- c) Describe the goals you hope to achieve through your advocacy;
- d) Identify the strategy(ies) and tactic(s) you will be using, and attach the Advocacy Planning Chart;

- e) Specify the target(s) with authority over the issue that you seek to influence (names, titles); and
- f) Describe each of the advocacy tools (3 for the Advocacy Tool assignment; determined by the student(s) for the ISP State Policy Contest assignment) you will be using and why you think each tool is appropriate for this advocacy effort.

Advocacy tool share: Each student will share at least one advocacy tool with the class to receive constructive feedback from fellow students.

Revised strategy summary & Advocacy planning chart: Revisions incorporating the professor's feedback are due together with the final Advocacy Tool submission.

Advocacy tools: Tools must be from the following list:

- a) Talking points to be used in advocating your position;
- b) Fact sheet for a lawmaker;
- c) Op-ed;
- d) Testimony for an elected or appointed body;
- e) Letter to the editor;
- f) Letter to local, state, or national legislator;
- g) Press release;
- h) Radio or TV spot;
- i) Website with dissemination plan; or
- j) Other advocacy tools, if approved by course professor.

At least one of these tools must be implemented through publication, presentation, or dissemination to lawmakers or the public.

Up to 3 extra credit points will be awarded for implementing additional tools: 1 pt. per tool submitted for publication, 2 pts. per tool published, presented, or publicly disseminated.

ISP State Policy Contest submission: Must follow the contest guidelines and be submitted to the professor for review prior to the contest deadline. Full credit will not be awarded for the Revised Strategy Summary without completion of this submission.

4) Advocacy event, community meeting, or campaign volunteering – 10 points

Each student is expected to attend one advocacy event *or* one community government meeting (e.g., Houston City Council, other local municipal board, school board) *or* volunteer 3-5 hours for an existing advocacy effort or issue or political campaign (e.g., local or gubernatorial primary campaign). Whichever option you choose, this should be a brand-new experience for you, different from your previous professional and personal experiences. This is expected to be separate from your Advocacy Strategy and Implementation project, something you would not attend or participate in otherwise.

After attending the event or volunteering, each student will be expected to briefly:

- a) describe to the class the experience;
- b) Describe what he/she learned from the experience; and
- c) Discuss his/her impressions about how accessible such experiences are for citizens or social work professionals who wish to engage in affecting social policy.

DUE: 4/28/11, in class

5) Reflective essay – 20 points

Each student will select and read one a book about ordinary citizens or social activists who have engaged in policy advocacy. A short list of books to choose from will be distributed to students on the first day of class.

Based on the book, students are expected to write a 6-8 page paper. Select a character(s) in the book and discuss the following:

- a) How does the character(s) engage in policy practice?
- b) What motivates him/her to do so?
- c) Why did the character(s) choose his/her selected tactics?
- d) What are the personal, community, and social impacts or consequences of his/her work and commitment?
- e) Did reading this book change your perspective concerning the role of advocacy in your life?
- f) How will you integrate advocacy into your professional social work practice?

DUE: 4/29/11, by 5:00 p.m.