THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 835
COURSE TITLE, SEMESTER AND YEAR: Poverty Policy Spring 2010
INSTRUCTOR: Dan Hudgins, MSW, ACSW
School of Social Work, UNC Chapel Hill
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Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550
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OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Tuesdays, 12:00-2:00 or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will provide students with a framework for advanced policy analysis and strategies for policy change, with a focus on national and state poverty policy, focusing on legal, socio-political, and economic factors influencing financing, access, and service delivery. This course explores skills and strategies for policy analysis and change.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The student who successfully completes this course should be able to demonstrate understanding of the following issues in regard to poverty policy:

1. Identify the principles, foundation and provisions of the primary social welfare programs that affect Poverty Policy.
2. Demonstrate the analytic, theoretical and value assessment skills that enable social workers to evaluate policies and apply change strategies.
3. Apply concepts and principles of human rights, social justice, and social work ethics to policy analysis, development and change strategies.
4. Understand different national definitions and trends in poverty and income and wealth inequality.
5. Explain the intended and actual consequences of the major US poverty policies.
6. Discuss ethical issues in current poverty policy, including individual and family rights, issues of distributive justice, and issues of power, discrimination, and oppression, particularly with regard to racial and ethnic minorities.
7. Understand the specific features of US poverty policy in contrast with other nations.
8. Develop leadership strategies for planning, developing, and changing poverty policies in a context of empowerment and partnership with individuals, families and communities.

**Expanded Description:**
The ability to understand the complexities of poverty policy development and implementation is crucial for successful professional social work practice settings. This is because social workers shape policy, implement programs, respond to systemic inequities and assure that services are available for individuals and families who need them. This course will examine critically a number of relevant poverty policies in the US in a cross-national perspective.

**Required Texts/Readings**


**Teaching Methods**

Class participation: In order to maximize everyone’s learning, we will rely on the contributions and insights of all students when issues are discussed. The participation of each student is essential, and responsibility for class discussion is shared. Class participation includes attendance, being prepared to discuss readings and assignments, sharing your opinions on the topic at hand, facilitating the participation of other students, and engaging with guest speakers.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial to both your learning experience and the learning of your colleagues. Students with more than one unexcused absence will not earn an H.

Reading assignments: You are responsible for reading all assigned material before the class date for which the readings are assigned. Students will be required to submit a discussion question from the readings that are to be emailed by noon on the Friday before class each Monday class. The questions are to be emailed to danhudgins@unc.edu.

**Class Assignments**
1. Write an opinion/editorial piece that is a 500 word response to a current social issue, program or policy designed to be submitted to a newspaper or other publication. The submission can address a problem on the local, state, or national level relevant poverty reduction. The submission should catch the attention of the reader using relevant data or a case example, provide background on the issue and propose a solution. Extra credit will be provided if the student has the op-ed piece published.
2. Write a paper that describes the effectiveness of one state or federal policy in reducing poverty. Students may choose to focus on a sub-group of poor or low-income people (e.g., people with developmental disabilities or single mothers or people with severe and
persistent mental illnesses). This paper is expected to be a thorough and thoughtful analysis of the adequacy and efficacy of the policy, which relies on credible research evidence. Here are some examples of policies that could be analyzed: Earned Income Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Social Security (Old Age Insurance). Papers will be approximately 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, typed in 12 point font, plus references. At the end of the semester, you will summarize your findings and policy analysis in a class presentation of no more than 10 minutes. Presentations will be scheduled in the final two class sessions. Students are required to attend the classes when others present.

Final Exam – This in-class exam will cover all of the assigned readings and material covered in class discussions, lectures and videos.

GRADING SYSTEM

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Clear Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Entirely Satisfactory</td>
<td>80-93</td>
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<td>Low Passing</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<td>F</td>
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POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to complete assigned and independent readings, contribute to the development of a positive learning environment, and demonstrate your learning through written assignments and class participation. Original written work is expected and required. The University of North Carolina has a rich and longstanding tradition of honor. If you have not yet done so, carefully read the Student Code of Honor. All submitted work must conform to the Honor Code of the University of North Carolina. For information on the Honor Code, including guidance on representing the words, thoughts, and ideas of others, please see: http://instrument.unc.edu

Please note that plagiarism is defined in the Code as “the intentional representation of another person’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own.” Violation of the Honor Code will result in a grade of 0 points for the assignment, referral to the Honor Court.

From the Code: “It is the responsibility of every student to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity. Students will conduct all academic work within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code, which prohibits the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in all academic processes.”

You must submit your assignments electronically (by email) with only your PID number (not your name) on them. However, I will provide an Honor Code statement for you to
sign in class. Work will not be graded for which this affirmation is not submitted. The statement reads as follows:

I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations, students with disabilities must contact the instructor and the Department of Disability Services as soon as possible. You may reach the Department of Disability Services at 919-962-8300 (Voice/TDD) or http://disabilityservices.unc.edu

Pursuant to UNC policy, instructors are not permitted to give accommodations without the permission and direction of the Department of Disability Services. Students must obtain such permission in advance of the due date for the first assignment.

COURSE OUTLINE

January 11

Introductions and course overview
- Poverty policy in the larger context of US policy
- Who are poor people in the US?
- Video: Poverty Definition
- Exercise: In-class quiz-No grade

Readings:
Sacks, Jeffery, The End of Poverty (Text) Introduction and Chapter 1 pp 1-25.

January 25

Review of policy analysis framework

Exercise: Applying Policy Analysis Framework

Readings:

February 1

Older adults, the Social Security Act, and poverty reduction

Readings:
February 8

Welfare Reform and Assistance to Families and Children

Readings:


Conduct a web search on current demographic trends affecting the American Family that you are interested in. Bring information to class.

February 15

Gender Dimensions of Poverty

Readings:

Brady, David and Kall, Denise, “Nearly universal, but somewhat distinct: The feminization of poverty in affluent Western democracies, 1969-2000” http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleListURL& _method=list&_ArticleListURLID=1143210140&_sort=r&view=c&_acct=C000004198&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=130907&md5=04b1636b6146d02efafee8fc7411220a


February 22

Op/Ed Assignment Due

Poverty in Developing Countries

Video: Mohammad Yunus, “Creating a World Without Poverty”

Readings:

Sacks, Jeffery, *The End of Poverty* (Text) Chapters 2, 3, 4 pp 26-89.
March 1

Community Approach to Poverty: Durham County

**Readings:**


Guest Speakers: Sharon Hirsch, Assistant Director, Durham County DSS
Mel Williams, Pastor, Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, NC

March 15

Ending Child Poverty in the U.K.

**Readings:**


Review the Website of The Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University. Be prepared to discuss one of the benefits comparing the provision of these benefits from an international perspective.

March 22

African Poverty

**Video:** Dead Aid: Dambiso Moyo Lecture at UNC on Nov. 11, 2009

**Readings:**


March 29

Asset Development and the Benefit Bank

**Readings:**

Review the web site for the Benefit Bank:
http://www.thebenefitbank.com/node


Guest Speakers: Ralph Gildehaus, JD, MDC Inc., Chapel Hill, NC
Andrea Taylor, Research Instructor, UNC-CH School of Social Work

**April 5**

Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity: UNC-CH School of Law

**Readings:**

Review the web site:
http://www.law.unc.edu/centers/poverty/default.aspx

Guest Speaker: Gene Nichol, J.D., Professor and Director, Center on Work and Opportunity

**April 12**

Ending Poverty

**Readings:**


**April 19**

Class Presentations

**Readings:**


**April 26**

Class Presentations and Final Exam