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

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 837
COURSE TITLE, SEMESTER AND YEAR: Disability Policy Spring 2010
INSTRUCTOR: Name Susan L. Parish, PhD, MSW
Room 563-I
School of Social Work
Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, Campus Box 3550
Email: parish@unc.edu

COURSE ROOM & SCHEDULE: Room 107; Mondays 9:00a-10:30a

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Using an advanced policy analysis framework, this course focuses
on strategies for policy change, national and state policy, and legal
and socio-political factors influencing financing, access and
service delivery.

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

1. Identify the principles, foundation and provisions of the primary social welfare programs
   that affect disability policies in the United States.
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 specific current disability policies regarding financing, ethical, and legal
   issues related to civil rights, income transfers, education, housing, employment and
   health care.
5. Explain the interrelationships among disability policies at the federal, state, and local
   levels.
6. Explain the intended and actual consequences of the major US disability policies.
7. Discuss ethical issues in current disability policy, including individual and family rights,
   issues of distributive justice, and issues of power, discrimination, oppression, culture &
   race?
8. Articulate both formal and informal disability policy development and strategies at
   multiple system levels.
9. Develop leadership strategies for planning, developing, and changing disability policies
   in a context of empowerment and partnership with individuals, families and communities.
**Expanded Description:**
The ability to understand the complexities of disability policy development and implementation is crucial for successful professional practice in an array of fields in which social workers practice, as 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 critically examine a number of relevant health and mental health policies and their effects on clients, practitioners, and systems.

**Required Texts/Readings**
There are no texts for this course. Readings will be available on the internet or posted on Blackboard: http://blackboard.unc.edu/

**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 absence will not earn an H. Students with more than two absences will not earn a P.

Reading assignments: You are responsible for reading all assigned material before the class date for which the readings are assigned.

**Note:** The instructor will distribute and assign additional required readings.

**Class Assignments**
There is one written assignment for this class, in addition to the final exam. Students may independently choose a writing assignment that meets their own individual learning objectives. Some possible ideas are given below, but these are offered for illustration purposes only. All reasonable ideas will be considered.

**Written Assignment is Due: Before 9AM on Monday April 19**

*Idea #1* – Students will comprehensively and thoughtfully evaluate the accessibility of their field placement organization to people with disabilities and develop a plan to significantly improve such access. This paper should address the following questions: Does the organization serve people with disabilities? Are people with specific types of disabilities excluded? Why? What are
the specific steps the organization should take to improve the accessibility of its services for people with disabilities? Note that accessibility is defined broadly and should not be construed to simply represent physical access. Consider all levels of leadership in the organization, from the board of directors to the service recipients.

**Idea #2** – Students will write a paper that describes the impact of one state or federal policy on the health or financial well-being of people with disabilities. Students may choose to focus on a sub-group of people with disabilities (e.g., people with developmental disabilities or mothers with physical impairments 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: Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Ryan White Care Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act.

**Idea #3** – Students will write a history of a particular phase of the development of disability policy. Students will use standards of rigorous historical research and rely solely on primary resources. This paper is expected to be a thorough and thoughtful historical recount, which relies on credible research evidence.

**Idea #4** – Students will develop a series (3-4) of policy briefs that address a particular problem related to people with disabilities and social welfare services. Possible topics could include health care financing or access, housing affordability, family support services, income transfers,

**Idea #5** – Students will develop a comprehensive evaluation of a particular social welfare service that was not originally designed for people with disabilities (e.g., rape crisis service, homelessness support services, adult protective services) for a specific population with disabilities (e.g., people with developmental disabilities, people with severe and persistent mental illnesses, mothers with physical disabilities, children who are technology dependent). This evaluation should thoroughly appraise the efficacy, adequacy, and effectiveness of the social welfare service, and offer a set of recommendations for improvement.

**Idea #6** – Students will prepare a strategy for securing passage or implementation of a pending disability policy. Students may choose any relevant and current legislation (state or federal). Imagine that NASW or NC NASW has hired you to lead their advocacy effort. You will lay out the specific advocacy approach the organization should take, and you must delineate your rationale or justification of this approach. Note that you are presenting this strategy to a lay audience.

**Idea #7** – Students will comprehensively analyze a recent US Supreme Court decision that creates or is related to disability policy. Analysis of state Supreme Court decisions would also be appropriate.
Idea #8 – Students will thoroughly compare an aspect of US disability policy to that of another nation or nations. Examples of social welfare policies that might be considered: child protective services, sexual assault services, domestic violence, homeless services, poverty policy.

Idea #9 – Students will thoroughly compare the impact of a facet of US social welfare policy to the impact of another nation’s social welfare policy on the same population of people with disabilities. Examples of social welfare policies that might be considered: child protective services, sexual assault services, domestic violence, homeless services, poverty policy.

Final Exam – 55% of semester grade – 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>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Entirely Satisfactory</td>
<td>80-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Low Passing</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>&lt;70</td>
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**Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments**

Papers are to be submitted electronically to the instructor via email BEFORE 9am on the day they are due, without exception. Late papers, including those needing revisions to conform to APA style, will be reduced by 20% for each 24-hour period for which they are late, without exception. Paper copies of assignments will not be accepted.

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

You 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

UNIT 1 - WEEK 1: JANUARY 11, 2010

Introductions and course overview, Review of policy analysis framework, Disability policy in the larger context of US policy, demographic distribution of people with disabilities in the US

Readings

UNIT 2 - WEEKS 2-4: JANUARY 25, FEBRUARY 1 & FEBRUARY 8, 2010

Disability rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act and its foundations

Readings

**UNIT 3 – WEEKS 5-6: FEBRUARY 15, FEBRUARY 22 & MARCH 1, 2010**


**Readings**


**UNIT 4 - WEEKS 7-9: MARCH 15, MARCH 22 & MARCH 29, 2010**

Health policy: Medicaid, Medicare, Maternal & Child Health Title V; Children with special health care needs

**Readings**


**UNIT 5 - WEEK 10: APRIL 12, 2010**

Education policy; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Early Intervention

**Readings**

UNIT 6 – WEEK 11: APRIL 5, 2010

Housing policy

Readings

UNIT 7 - WEEK 12-13: APRIL 19, 2010

Poverty policy and people with disabilities and asset building policy

Readings

UNIT 8 – WEEK 14: APRIL 26, 2010

Course wrap-up & review for final exam

Final Exam – date to be announced