The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
School of Social Work

Course No: SOWO 530 (Section 002: Mondays 9:00 – 11:50am)

Course Title: Foundations of Social Welfare & Social Work
Fall 2008

Instructor: Mat Despard, MSW
School of Social Work, Room 402-E
Office: 919.962.6467
Fax: 919.843.8715
despard@email.unc.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 12-1:30pm; Tuesdays 11am – 1pm
Fridays 12-1pm and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Introduces public welfare policy through lecture and discussion of the purposes public welfare serves and describes the most important programs created by those policies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate familiarity with existing public welfare structures in the U.S. and the ideals which shaped existing public welfare structures;
2. Identify and describe the social concerns which those structures have or have not been able to address successfully. Special attention will be given to their impact on various family types.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of social work and effects of social policy on historic and contemporary patterns of social welfare service provision;
4. Identify and describe the analytic issues involved in the development of contemporary social welfare policy;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the values and ethics of social work that guide professional behavior in the conduct of public policy activities;
6. Demonstrate a working knowledge of social policies that address contemporary public welfare issues and the way these policies impact families’ health and well-being;
7. Identify conditions that promote or deter equal access to resources for minorities and women and be able to discuss concerns related to race, disability, gender and sexual orientation.
SKILLS BASE
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Assess clients for eligibility for major publicly funded programs and/or benefits.
2. Analyze the effects of social welfare policies on the well-being of and opportunities for lower-income individuals and families and other vulnerable populations.
3. Articulate the underlying values and principles of major public welfare policies.
4. Describe how legislative and administrative policy is made and how to influence policy development.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The three required course texts can be purchased at the Health Sciences Bookstore or online through sites like www.amazon.com or www.bestbookbuys.com:


Additional required readings listed in “Class Schedule and Assigned Readings” below can be found ONLINE:
   1) At the URL stated in the reading list
      OR
   2) Through an electronic academic journal accessible through UNC Libraries (http://www.lib.unc.edu/) marked as “UL” (for “UNC Libraries”)
      OR
   3) Via Blackboard (http://blackboard.unc.edu/) “BB” (login and find SOWO 530 – Section 002 choose “Assignments” and “Course Readings” folder)

RESOURCES
All course lectures, syllabus, assignments, and external links to useful web sites are or will be available on Blackboard, at http://blackboard.unc.edu

TEACHING METHODS
I approach this course with the assumption that all students want to understand the origins of social work as well as how to create change by advocating for policies that promote social justice. While holding steadfastly to our profession’s commitment to
social justice, I will encourage students to examine social issues through different political perspectives.

While a lot of content will be covered, I will try my best to use a variety of instructional methods, including use of multimedia, guest speakers, classroom debates, and small group activities. Because adult learners benefit relatively little from lecture, my approach will be interactive, so be prepared to answer questions based on the assigned readings and topic for the day.

I will not go through all of my powerpoint slides in class, but they will be an effective way to help you study for the mid-term and final exams, so they should be reviewed during your own time.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Date/Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Monday, 10/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Exercise</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Monday, 10/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimony Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Abstract: 9/22&lt;br&gt;Paper: 11/24&lt;br&gt;Presentations: 11/17, 11/24 &amp; 12/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Friday, December 5 9:00am - Auditorium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Budget Exercise** and **Testimony Assignment** will be completed independently by students. Detailed descriptions of these assignments start on page 16.

The **mid-term** and **final exams** will be in-class, closed book examinations comprised of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay questions. The content of the examination questions will be derived both from required readings and classroom lectures and discussion.

**Grade Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Clear Excellence</td>
<td>94-100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Entirely Satisfactory</td>
<td>80-93 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Low Passing</td>
<td>70-79 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>&lt;70 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

It is expected that students will attend all classes or notify the instructor in advance and make arrangements to obtain class notes from other students if there is a compelling reason (illness, family emergency) to miss a class. The instructor will not place notes in student boxes or leave messages concerning what was covered or what is due. Participation in discussion is expected, however, it is recognized that some people are
quieter learners than others. Consequently, participation will be evaluated on the thoughtfulness of questions and comments.

The adult learning instruction method will be used in this class. Students will be expected to have completed all reading prior to class and most of class time will focus on discussion and activities to integrate learning. This will involve both working individually and in small groups. Discussion, questions, and challenges are encouraged throughout the course. Learning can only truly occur in a space where all participants feel respected and safe. Therefore all class participants, student and instructor, will be expected to interact in a collegial manner, challenging ideas while respecting people.

Attendance and participation will constitute 10% of the final grade and can be the deciding factor when grades are marginal. Attendance at all classes (not counting excused absences) guarantees you 7 of the 10 points, additional points will be added for quality of participation in activities and discussion.

**POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**
It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will sign a pledge on all graded coursework certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work.

*All written assignments should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”* Credit will not be awarded for unpledged work.

Please refer to the *APA Style Guide*, The *SSW Manual*, and the *SSW Writing Guide* for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services ([http://disabilityservices.unc.edu](http://disabilityservices.unc.edu)) and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.
POLICIES ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM
Use of electronic devices for non-class related activities (e.g. checking email, surfing, IMing, blogging, playing games) is prohibited. Use of laptops is permitted to follow a lecture, as a tool for small group activities and in-class assignments or as an approved accommodation for students with disabilities (see above).

POLICY ON READING DRAFT VERSIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS
I am happy to review draft papers, but here are my restrictions, which are necessary to be fair to all students. If you want me to review a draft paper, you must:

1. Give it to me at least two weeks before the assignment is due, so you can incorporate my feedback and still submit your final paper on time.

2. Provide a draft that is coherent, though it can be in outline form so I can provide feedback concerning whether you are on the right track.

3. Print your draft and hand it in to me during class or email it to me.

I will email you my comments about how the draft can be strengthened, but it will not be a point-by-point list of specific instructions.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS
A paper is considered late if it is handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late papers will be reduced 10% per day, including weekends. Therefore, a paper that would merit a grade of 100 on Friday will receive a grade of 70 if submitted on Monday. Similarly, a paper due at 2pm on Monday handed in at 3pm will be considered 1 day late.

A grade of Incomplete is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g. family crisis, serious illness. It is the student’s responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. Those who have difficulty writing are STRONGLY encouraged to contact the Writing Center (962-7710 or http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/)

The School of Social Work faculty has adopted APA style as the preferred format for papers and publications. All written assignments for this course should be submitted in APA format. A summary was distributed at orientation. The web sites listed below

SOWO 530 – Despard
Fall 2008
provide additional information, though students are strongly encouraged to purchase the following text:


- [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html) (APA Style for material in electronic formats)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html) (general information about documentation using APA style)
- [http://www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/) (electronic version of Strunk's *The Elements of Style* which was originally published in 1918)
- [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html) (The Writing Center, links to on-line reference material and many other useful sites for authors)
# SOWO 530 Class Schedule & Due Dates - Quick Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Progressive Era Roots of Modern Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/22</td>
<td>The Social Security Act: Origin, Titles &amp; History: Part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Testimony Abstract Due *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>The Social Security Act: Origin, Titles &amp; History: Part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>* Midterm Exam *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>Understanding Social Welfare Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>Health &amp; Mental Health Policy in North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Analyzing Health Care Reform: State and National Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Budget Exercise Due</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Policies to Increase Economic Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Testimony Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>Testimony Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Policy Briefs Due *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Testimony Presentations (if necessary) Final Exam Review Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>* Final Exam * 9:00am - Auditorium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No Class – Monday, September 1, 2008 – LABOR DAY Holiday*
## CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1:</th>
<th>Introduction &amp; Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/25</td>
<td>• Introductions &amp; course overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic social welfare concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Legal origin and types of social welfare policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings:** None

**Focus Questions:**
1. Why is social welfare policy important for social workers to understand?
2. What is social welfare policy – who gets help from the government? Is it broader than programs to help the needy?
3. What are the legal origins of social welfare policy? What are different types of policies?

**No class on Monday, September 1 – Labor Day Holiday**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2:</th>
<th>History &amp; Context of Social Welfare Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>• Value and normative foundations of modern social welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing views of disability over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>Who Said This?</em> Political Quotes Activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings:**

*(Note: Read these two chapters for an understanding of the changing views of need and disability over time and the impact on policy and practice, not for memorization of dates, people and places.)*

**Focus Questions:**
1. What are the most salient social values and norms that shape our social welfare system? How have these values and norms been shaped by historic events?
2. What have been the major ways in which disability has been viewed over the past two centuries in the U.S.? How have these views affected social welfare policies and practices?
3. What disability group was the first to organize and self-advocate? Why do you think they were the first?
Week 3: Progressive Era Roots of Modern Social Work

9/15
- Progressive Era: roots of social work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Impact of social policies on racial and ethnic groups

Readings:
ICL: Chapters 2-3, 6, 8
DBG: Chapters 1-2

Focus Questions:
1. How can social work practice be described in the Progressive Era? What characteristics of Progressive era social work remain alive today?
2. What were the unique contributions of African-American social workers during the Progressive Era?
3. How did 19th and early 20th century social policies affect racial and ethnic minority groups?

Week 4: The Social Security Act: Origin, Titles & History: Part 1
* Testimony Abstract Due *

9/22
- Social Security Act & Titles
- Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Readings:
SHL: Chapter 1: The Nature of Public Policy


Read the following electronic pamphlets from SSA to understand program eligibility rules and benefits:


Focus Questions:
1. What was the significance of the Social Security Act in defining the U.S. social welfare system? How did social and political conditions during the Depression affect different stages of the policy cycle?
2. Can Social Security retirement benefits be defined as distributive, redistributive or regulatory policy?
3. Why is it important to pay attention to policy implementation and not just formulation?
4. How did social workers help frame our modern social welfare system in the FDR administration?
5. What are the key differences between SSI and SSDI? What are the benefits and limitations of social security retirement and survivor programs for different populations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5:</th>
<th>The Social Security Act: Origin, Titles &amp; History: Part 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9/29   | - Welfare Reform and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program  
|        | - Differential impact of federal programs on various population groups |

Readings:
- **DBG:** Chapter 5: Social Security Reform & People of Color
- **DBG:** Chapter 11: African-Americans and Welfare Reform.
- **SHL:** Chapter 2: The Evolution of Public Policy and Politics in America


1. How are women affected by social security benefit policies?
2. What are the major concerns of social security reform? How might different reform strategies differentially affect people of color?
3. Did Welfare Reform work? Why or why not? How should it be changed, if at all?
4. How did Welfare Reform embody new Federalism? Did it reflect a change in American values – a shift in political culture?

**Week 6:** Mid-Term Exam
10/6

**Week 7:** Understanding Social Welfare Policy
10/13
- Different roles and purposes of public policies
- How to analyze and understand policy
- Social welfare financing 101
- The story of HB 2363 – the “Bullying Bill” – The importance of state policy

**Readings:**
- **SHL:** Chapter 3: Approaches to Policy Analysis
  Chapter 4: Models and Public Policy Studies (only pp. 52-57)
  Chapter 5: Agenda Setting


  **Focus Questions:**
  1. How well does a *positivist* policy analysis approach work in examining social welfare policy? Are other approaches better?
  2. Which *policy decision-making approach* is most applicable to social welfare policies? Would an *elitist, pluralist* or *sub-government* policy / agenda setting model apply?
  3. How do we pay for social welfare programs? How does our tax system affect social welfare?
  4. What lessons from the Bullying Bill can we learn about how state policy is made and implemented?

**Week 8:** Health & Mental Health Policy in North Carolina
10/20
- Medicaid program eligibility parameters, benefits and financing
- Mental health reform in North Carolina
- Impact of mental health policy on racial and ethnic minorities

**Readings:**
- **DBG:** Chapter 7: Mental Health Policy and People of Color

  North Carolina General Assembly - Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse


Focus Questions:
1. Is Medicaid the same or different state-by-state? How well does it serve different vulnerable populations?
2. What was the original impetus for mental health reform legislation in NC – i.e. its problem stream? What has gone right/wrong with mental health reform in NC?
3. Which policy analysis approach would best be used to determine whether North Carolina’s Medicaid program is well formulated and implemented?
4. How are racial and ethnic minorities affected by mental health policy in the U.S.?

**Week 9:** Analyzing Health Care Reform: National Perspectives

*Budget Exercise Due*

10/27
- Covering the uninsured
- How care is financed
- Analyzing health care reform principles

**Readings:**

*Homework:* Read about (or watch or listen) to John McCain and Barack Obama’s health care proposals:

**SHL:**
Chapter 6: Policy Formulation
Chapter 7: Policy Implementation


Focus Questions:
1. What is a better response to the need for health care reform: government intervention or consumer and market incentives?
2. What interests are shaping the agenda setting process for health care reform? What characterizes the problem, policy and political streams of health care reform?
3. What’s the difference between “single payer” and “universal” health coverage?


11/3
- Economic trends that shape opportunity
- Poverty, income and wealth in the U.S.

Readings:
SHL: Chapter 11: Welfare Policy


Focus Questions:
1. Are economic opportunities getting better or worse for lower and middle-income families? Is the rich-poor gap getting better or worse?
2. Is poverty really a problem in the U.S.? What are different ways to understand and characterize poverty?
3. Why are wealth disparities important to understand?
Week 11: Policies to Increase Economic Opportunity

11/10
- Understand the self-help tradition among African-Americans
- Analyze differences between asset development and income assistance policies
- Analyze contemporary strategies to reduce poverty

Readings:

ICL: Chapter 7


Focus Questions:
1. How did Marcus Garvey and Lawrence Oxley promote self-help among African-Americans? How did their actions differ from government efforts to provide assistance?
2. Why is the Earned Income Tax Credit an important anti-poverty strategy? What does Berlin (2007) propose to strengthen it?
3. What makes asset development policies different than income maintenance and emergency assistance programs?
4. What historical injustices do asset development policies seek to ameliorate?

Week 12: Testimony Presentations

11/17

Readings: None.

Week 13: Testimony Presentations * POLICY BRIEFS DUE *

11/24

Readings: None.

Week 14: Testimony Presentations (continued – if needed)

Review Session, Course Evaluation

12/1

Readings: None.

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 5 - 9:00am - Auditorium
ASSIGNMENT: Budget Exercise – (15% of final grade)

DUE: October 27, 2008

General scope of the assignment:
As social workers you will often work with individuals who are attempting to survive with very little income, assets and other resources. They face difficult choices about how to spend their limited dollars to meet their basic needs. This exercise is intended to help you learn more about the struggles and dilemmas that families face to meet their basic needs and the public and private sector resources that can help.

You will be provided with a description of a family living in a particular North Carolina county and their income and other resources. Based on this description, you will complete the following sections:

1) **Family expenses:** Identify how much it costs your family to meet its basic needs. Use tools identified on Blackboard to help you estimate these costs and be sure to consider family size and the particular county. The expense amounts do not need to be exact. Reasonable estimates, such as for an electric bill, are fine. You only have to worry about losing points if you a) omit a very obvious expense like rent or food or b) your estimate is way off, like saying food for a family of 4 would be $80 a month (too low!). Only identify essential expenses like housing, child care, food, utilities and transportation.

2) **Resources:** Identify the assistance programs for which the family likely qualifies that will help them meet their basic needs in addition to their current income and assets. Be sure to consider both public sector – local, state and federal programs – and private sector resources – nonprofit organizations, faith communities, etc. Be sure to clearly distinguish between public and private sector resources and between in-kind and cash assistance. You do not need to obtain eligibility confirmation from local agency representatives. However, you need to do enough research to make reasonable assumptions about eligibility. It is okay to “fill in” your assigned scenario with additional, necessary information to determine eligibility for various programs – just make your assumptions explicit in your paper.

3) **Budget analysis:** What can you conclude from your examination of expenses and resources? Is this a family that can meet its basic needs with help? Why or why not? Present a simple budget to support your conclusion.

4) **Conclusions and Outlook:** What is this family’s long-term outlook? Will they continue to be able to meet their basic needs? What do you think they have to sacrifice just to meet their basic needs? Do you think they will they be able to
achieve longer-term goals, such as an emergency savings fund, saving for children’s college education, homeownership, car purchase, etc.? Lastly, what new insights did you gain and/or suspicions did you confirm about social welfare in doing this assignment?

This paper should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced. Papers longer than 5 pages will NOT be accepted. Be sure to identify your sources for information about resources and expenses and use APA format for different ways in which this information was obtained (i.e. personal communication, website, brochure). Using resources posted on Blackboard in the Assignments folder is strongly recommended.

Work on this assignment is strictly independent. Students may not receive help from one another. Honor code is in full effect.

ASSIGNMENT: Testimony/Policy Brief – (25% of final grade)

DUE: November 24, 2008 (Written Policy Brief – all students, regardless of oral presentation date)

Oral presentations on 11/17, 11/24 & 12/1

Students will conduct a mock expert testimony before a legislative panel of the North Carolina General Assembly concerning a bill of their choosing. You have been asked to testify concerning the bill because you are an expert in this particular field. If you like, you can adopt the identity of an existing advocacy or research organization or make one up.

You might wonder, “When will I ever provide legislative testimony as a social worker?” The purpose of this assignment is broader; you will gain experience in articulating and justifying a well-reasoned argument concerning an issue about which you are passionate. This is a skill that will prove useful in a variety of settings – speaking before a Board of Directors of your agency, a panel of United Way volunteers, a foundation program officer, city council, etc.

Students will 1) complete a testimony that includes a) an oral presentation and b) a written policy brief and 2) play the role of a legislator on a legislative panel questioning a fellow student expert.

Testimony
Students will receive their grade based on the testimony - the oral presentation and the written policy brief. You will need to carefully craft your testimony before the North Carolina legislature. You will need to make the logical, financial, and emotional case for your perspective on the proposed legislation. You have the difficult task of persuading a
body of individuals who generally will lack knowledge and experience in your subject area. As such, you must try to avoid jargon, be clear and concise, persuasive and authoritative. Your goal is to obtain passage of (or block) legislation which will affect the lives of your clients. You also must give your panel of Senators a copy of the bill you are addressing prior to your testimony, and a statement of whether you will oppose the bill. Detailed instructions about your testimony appears below.

Legislator Role
For the second part of the assignment, you will serve as a state senator on two or more mock legislative panels that is hearing testimony. You will receive a copy of and the student’s position on each bill for which you are hearing testimony. Your job will be to question your peer about her or his testimony. Your questions should be thoughtful and probing. Questions that reflect lack of knowledge about the bill and/or that are “softballs” (i.e. not challenging) will receive a poor evaluation. In playing your role as a legislator, you oppose the position supported by the person testifying before you, regardless of your personal feelings about the issue. You will prepare two thoughtful, well-considered questions for each expert who testifies before you. You must submit your prepared questions to the instructor the day of your panel appearance.

Additional Testimony Instructions
A single-paragraph statement (abstract) of the position you will take, and a copy of the legislation itself, is due in writing to the instructor on September 22, 2008. You decide the aspect of the bill to which you direct your testimony. You must choose a social welfare bill that is currently before either the North Carolina legislature, or another state legislature. Any bill you choose must address a substantive issue related to social welfare – technical, regulatory or language changes will not be accepted. Federal bills are NOT acceptable.

Oral presentation of testimony:
You will orally present your final testimony in class, with actual dates randomly assigned in class. Your testimony will be limited to 5 minutes and an additional 4 minutes will be used for questions and answers from the legislative panel. Consistent with real-life legislative testimony, this time constraint will be strictly enforced. You MUST practice your testimony in advance to ensure that you will not exceed the time limit, or fail to adequately use the opportunity to address the legislators.

You will present your testimony to a legislative panel comprised of your peers. To prepare for their questioning, you will give each legislator a draft of your testimony the week prior to your oral presentation. Like real legislators, your panel may or may not have knowledge of your subject area. Your job is to present your testimony in a compelling way. A dull reading of your testimony may put your legislators to sleep – not necessarily the best strategy to win legislative support for your position.
Policy Brief (Written Part of Assignment):
The purpose of a policy brief is to educate legislators and other decision-makers about an important issue that is the subject of the legislation that you either support or oppose in your oral testimony. Whereas the oral testimony is your opportunity to present compelling and persuasive argument based on ethical, moral, legal, and scientific reasons, the policy brief should be factual, evidence-based and logically tied to and supportive of your testimony. In other words, it is the substance that backs up your testimony.

Use Blackboard and do your own research to understand how policy briefs are written. The definition of a policy brief is a document which outlines the rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative or course of action in a current policy debate. In general, a policy brief has the following characteristics, which should be reflected in what you submit:

- **Concise** – legislators will not read lengthy, verbose reports;
- **Timely** – addresses an issue of current public concern;
- **Action-oriented** – problem can clearly be addressed through legislation;
- **Evidence-based** – data is used and analyzed;
- **Professional** – rational, without insulting, divisive or inflammatory rhetoric;
- **Feasible** – a problem(s) that can actually be solved or improved;
- **Accessible** – free of jargon; clear, understandable language;

The policy brief should be 3-6 pages in length, including charts, tables and graphs but excluding citations. For this assignment, with the exception of in-text and bibliographic references, APA format is waived. Look at examples of briefs to see how they are formatted to look professional, accessible, interesting, etc.

Sources of background information and supporting data
Like any expert preparing a policy brief to support your legislative testimony, you will rely primarily on the evidence generated by sound research on your topic. For your policy brief, you must rely on scholarly sources, using NO FEWER than:

- **4 articles** published in peer-reviewed research journals (e.g., Social Work, Research on Social Work Practice, Social Services Review, Health and Social Work, Child Development, American Journal of Public Health, Mental Retardation, Social Work Research, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science). At least one of these four articles must be drawn from a peer-reviewed social work journal. The other two may be drawn from any peer-reviewed journals, including social work journals.

- **3 reports** published by (two separate) think tanks or philanthropic and/or research organizations (e.g., Kaiser Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson

- **2 substantive reports from governmental agencies.** These may be generated by federal or state sources. Good federal sources for social welfare data include: U.S. Census Bureau, the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office, the Department of Health and Human Services, and its constituent agencies.

You may use more references than these minimum requirements, but all cited material must be drawn from these scholarly sources. “Popular culture” sources are not acceptable in research papers such as this testimony. Examples of forbidden sources: newspapers, websites, and magazines.

Paula Hinton, a fabulous reference librarian at the Davis Library, has created a website of sources useful for securing social welfare policy materials. You may access this website at: [http://www.unc.edu/~pphinton/swpolicy.html](http://www.unc.edu/~pphinton/swpolicy.html)

In addition, a document entitled **“Scholarly Sources”** can be found on Blackboard under “Course Documents”. This contains several web links to government and foundation data and research sites.

All sources of information are to be properly cited, following APA* format.


Policy briefs must be submitted to the instructor at the beginning of class on **November 24, 2008**, even if your oral testimony is scheduled for a later date.