Syllabus

Course Description
This course provides students with an introduction to the history, structure, and workings of the institution of social welfare and its relationship to the profession of social work and to society. The course introduces students to social work values, ethics, and critical thinking, and will help students begin to articulate their own perspectives on social welfare and social work. It will also introduce students to the experiences and perspectives of those who are clients of the human services delivery system.

Course Objectives
Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:
1. Describe the present conceptions of social welfare and social work from diverse perspectives and ideologies, including client-centered perspectives;
2. Summarize the Code of Ethics and primary social work values, and compare them with societal and personal values;
3. Give an overview of social work functions, roles, and fields of practice;
4. Outline the history of American social welfare and social work, identifying important figures, milestones, and movements;
5. Discuss the role and contributions of individuals and groups in the profession, including women, ethnic minorities, and people of color;
6. Articulate social values underlying the social welfare system, discuss contested arguments about the causes of poverty and its remedies, and identify opportunities for legislative, community, and grass-roots advocacy; and
7. Describe manifestations of institutional racism and sexism, as well as other forms of discrimination in the social welfare system.

Course content
1. Structure and characteristics of the present social welfare system;
2. History of social welfare as an institution within the context of American history;
3. Poverty and inequality: institutional racism, sexism, economic inequality, and other discrimination in the social welfare system and social work practice;
4. Client perspectives, grass-roots organizing, and advocacy; and
5. Current fields of practice in social work.
Course format
This class combines classroom and field-based approaches to learning. Classroom time will be spent in a combination of class discussions, lectures, guest speakers, videos, and cooperative learning exercises.

Required Text

Course Requirements
- **Class attendance.** Regular attendance is expected if you are to successfully pass and benefit fully from this course. If you must miss a class, it’s your responsibility to make certain you obtain any information that is given in your absence. This includes notes, assignments, or changes in assignments. Excessive absences will affect your grade, and fortunately, so will excessive attendance.
- **Reading.** Readings are assigned in the text according to the subject(s) we are covering. You’re expected to have read the assigned reading before coming to class. (Hint: if you don’t read the assigned material in the text, you will miss a good learning opportunity. You will also find that taking in-class exams will not be a pleasant experience.) The textbook is comprehensive, well-written, and relevant, and it will greatly increase your understanding of and appreciation for the social work profession. Additional reading material may be distributed in class.
- **Mini assignments.** These assignments will be given three times in class as a means of enhancing your understanding and application of course objectives. They may include assignments such as a short essay, research task and review, media review, in-class writing assignment, or an out-of-class exercise.
- **Examinations.** There will be a mid-term and a final examination, consisting of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions.

Grading
- Mini assignments (3) 30 points
- Mid-term examination 30 points
- Final examination 30 points
- Class participation 10 points

100 total points
Your final grade is based on a percentage of your total earned points.

Academic and Professional/Ethical Standards
Advancement of students from one quarter to the next is contingent upon satisfactory progress each quarter. Evaluation of student progress in classroom courses is based on course performance, completion of assignments, professional behavior, and ethical conduct according to the NASW Code of Ethics and the EWU Student Conduct Code. These professional and ethical standards are part of academic requirements, and abrogating these standards could result in failure of the course.
Universal Accessibility
Every effort will be provided to make this class universally accessible, regardless of disability or other individual categorization. Students with needs for alternate learning materials should inform the instructor in order for access to be arranged adequately.

Mini Assignment #1
Due October 10

Answer the following questions in a one- or two-page typed essay. You may write in a narrative format, or you may answer each question individually.

1. What is your initial assessment of the fit between you and the social work profession? Between your personal ethics and social work’s Code of Ethics?

2. What qualities / characteristics have you developed that are well-suited to social work practice? How did you develop these qualities?

3. What qualities are you being called upon to develop that will enhance your effectiveness as a social worker? What opportunities might you create that will enable you to develop these qualities?

Mini Assignment #2
Due November 14

The purpose of this assignment is to raise your consciousness about current social welfare-related realities of local, state, or national importance. Such situations make the news through the variety of media available to us daily. Local newspapers and periodicals feature social welfare-related topics daily, as do state and national newspapers, magazines, and other writings. Other sources include underground, indigenous, radical, or special interest sources.

Your tasks in this assignment are as follows: Select one article or story that is relevant to social work practice. The article may focus on a variety of social welfare issues discussed in class and in the text, such as services for children, individuals, and families, income maintenance issues, poverty, populations at risk, social justice, social policy, diversity, discrimination, or oppression. Be certain the article warrants significant analysis; that is, it should reflect sound journalistic principles and address the subject in an organized and fairly comprehensive way.

Attach the article (or a copy of it) to a two-page, typed, double-spaced commentary that includes:

* The source of the news, following professional citation practice. You may
address the key point(s) of the article in 1-2 sentences, if you choose. However, since I will read the article, there’s no need to provide a thorough summary of its contents.

* The relevance of the piece to social work. How does this article relate to the foundational social work knowledge you are learning in this class? Use the vocabulary of social work to discuss how this article reflects social work concepts, perspectives, knowledge, values, and/or ethics.

* Implications for social work practice or for your work as a social worker. How does this article address issues of institutional racism, sexism, classism, social justice, power, or discrimination in society?

**Mini Assignment # 3**

You are asked to do the following:

1. Identify your two state representatives and one state senator, and identify your state legislative district.

2. Identify your one Congressional representative and two U.S. senators, and identify your Congressional district.

3. Identify an issue related to social work that you care about, with either state or national ramifications. It is recommended that you consult a website or publications by an advocacy organization(s) that does advocacy on this issue. If you do so, you may identify compelling information or statistics that can be used to educate and influence others about this issue.

4. Write a letter to either your state representatives or your Congressional representatives, depending on the issue and the legislative body that will address it. (Each representative should get his or her own letter, though you only need to turn in one copy.) The attached hand-out from the Children’s Alliance will provide you with guidance as you write your letter. If you choose to write to your state representatives, and you will be in Olympia on February 18 for lobby day, let them know you will be in town and look forward to meeting with them, if their schedules permit.

You may choose to send these letters or not; this is not a requirement. However, if you do send these letters, you will begin an important relationship with your legislative representatives that will contribute to effective public policy for the people we serve in social work.

Be certain you include the requested information from the first two items, as well as a copy of the letter you wrote to one of your representatives.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>Social welfare and social work</td>
<td>Introduction to the course, the class, and each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td><strong>The social work profession</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Social work’s mission, professional values, ethics, &amp; intervention process</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>Read in text: Chapter 1</td>
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<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Social work theories and perspectives</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Ecosystems, generalist, &amp; strengths perspectives; client self-determination</td>
<td>Speaker: Diane Somerday, MSW, EWU School of Social Work</td>
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<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Social work theories and perspectives, cont.</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>Political perspectives, ideologies, impact of social welfare policy</td>
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<td>Read in text: Chapter 2</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Social welfare policies and issues</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>The institution and history of social welfare, social legislation in America</td>
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<td>Read in text: Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Social welfare policies and issues, continued</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>Income maintenance programs, policy, and practice</td>
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<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>Social work potpourri</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
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<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>Poverty and populations at risk</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>Current issues, impacts, social policy and practice</td>
<td>Reading in text: Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>Poverty and populations at risk, cont.</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Clients’ perspectives, experiences, challenges, and solutions</td>
<td>Speakers: VOICES</td>
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<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>Catch-up day</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
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<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>Diversity and social work</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Current issues, forms of discrimination, social justice</td>
<td>Review for Mid-Term Examination</td>
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<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>Mid-Term Examination (Chapters 1-4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Family and children’s services</td>
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Historical perspectives, services, and structure
Theoretical perspectives, practice models
Read in text: Chapter 5

Nov 7  Family and children’s services, continued
        Wed  Current issues, trends, issues for advocacy

Nov 12 Social work in mental health
        Mon  Knowledge/values/skills, generalist practice, issues for advocacy
        Read in text: Chapter 6
        Speaker:

Nov 14 Social work in mental health, continued
        Wed  Mental health policy, practice with diverse populations
             Client perspectives
             Mini Assignment Due
             Speaker:

Nov 19 Social work in criminal justice
        Mon  Review in text: Chapter 12
             Speaker:

Nov 21 Happy Thanksgiving

Nov 26 Social work with older adults
        Mon  Social work roles and services, strengths and stressors of older adults
             Review in text: Chapter 11

Nov 28 Developmental disabilities and social work
        Wed  Social work in health care
             Social work in schools
             Speakers:

Dec 3 Legislative advocacy and grass-roots social change
        Mon  Advocacy, power, and social change. Macro practice
             Mini Assignment Due

Dec 5 Final Examination
        Wed

        SOWK 273: Introduction to Social Work
        Bibliography


