



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**School of Social Work
Course Outline - SOWK 501**

School Vision: Building upon a foundation of social justice and an ethic of care, we are a community of learners actively engaged in the development of critical, transformative knowledge for social work practice.

Year/Term	Winter 2017 (Term 2)
Course Title	SOWK 501 - Canadian Social Policy (3 credits)
Course Schedule	Mondays, 6 - 9 pm
Course Location	Room 223 – Jack Bell Building (School of Social Work)

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	e-mail address
Patricia Johnston	PhD Student Office (main floor)	604-379-2465	Patricia.Johnston@ubc.ca
Office Hours	Wednesdays 4pm to 6 pm or by appointment		

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

SOWK 501 is a graduate student seminar in Canadian social policy. The seminar introduces the student to basic elements of social policy, what it is, how social policy can be conceptualized and formulated and the history and current status of a range of different policy areas. Students can explore and deal with issues and problems related to their interests through the course assignments.

The course looks at social policy as more than policies that deal with traditional social programmes and the redistribution of wealth. In the 2000s, social welfare is being greatly affected by developments not commonly thought of in relation to social policy. The social implications of climate change, implications for lifestyles and considerations of equity, the social impacts of a globalized economy, record levels of migration and immigration are all issues relevant to modern social policy.

In a globalized world, Canadian government policy affects populations beyond our national borders. How does the Canadian government's approach to promoting the Canadian mining industry abroad, impact on the health and well-being of populations – especially Indigenous peoples – affected by these activities? Would a policy of restricting or labeling garments made in other countries, commensurate with a consideration for basic human rights, be considered an economic policy, foreign policy or social policy?

Social policies and programmes can be initiated at federal, provincial and municipal regions in Canada. Policies to be considered in the course, depending on student interests and needs, can range from those affecting Indigenous peoples, income distribution, affirmative action for disabled peoples or the provision of social housing. The idea of the seminar is to introduce the student to definitions of social policy and discuss course content.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students completing this course should have:

- a critical understanding of what social policy is or should/could be; both the formal and informal or indirect ways in which policy is expressed;
- an appreciation of philosophical and ideological realities informing policy formation and the challenges posed by the logic of modern/postmodern capitalism in the making of policy;
- a knowledge of jurisdictional issues relevant to the development of social policy in Canada;
- an appreciation of the impact of globalization on social policy in Canada;
- an in-depth understanding of policy challenges and initiatives in areas of policy formation of interest and concern to the student.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

Custom text available for purchase at UBC Bookstore. Additional articles, podcasts and videos accessible online and through the UBC Library will be assigned.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Class Topic
January 9, 2017	<i>Introduction & What is social policy?</i>
January 16, 2017	<i>Ideologies and Philosophies Underlying Social Policy</i> <i>Assignment #1 due</i>
January 23, 2017	<i>The Influence of Neoliberalism on Social Policy</i>
January 30, 2017	<i>Making and Debating Social Policy in Canada</i>
February 6, 2017	<i>Constructing Social Policy Problems & Framing Policy Issues</i>
February 13, 2017	<i>Policy Research & Analysis</i>
February 20, 2017	<i>Policy Writing & Communication</i>
February 27, 2017	<i>Policy Research & Analysis</i>

March 6, 2017	<i>Reconciliation in Policy</i>
March 13, 2017	<i>In-class Presentations</i> <i>Assignment #2</i>
March 20, 2017	<i>Social Policy – locally, nationally and internationally (part 1)</i>
March 27, 2017	<i>Guest Speaker</i>
April 3, 2017	<i>Course review</i> <i>Assignment #3 due</i>

EVALUATION

Assignment #1: What is social policy? (10%)

Write a one-page paper that answers:

- a) what is social policy? Why is social policy important to social work? And,
- b) introduce yourself and your vocation (who you are, what your interests are and where you hope to end up in terms of your career). Where does policy fit into your path?

Due: January 16, 2017 by email before class

Assignment #2: In Class Presentation (30%)

Develop a group presentation for the class on a policy issue. You are expected to engage with the other students as an educator. Some things to pay attention to include focusing the presentation, the use of AV materials, class involvement in the learning experience. Your presentation must be 20 minutes long. Following each presentation, you will be asked questions for up to 10 minutes (30 minutes total).

Each presentation will include:

1. Background and contextual research (i.e. What are the problem(s) this policy is attempting to address? Why is this policy needed? What are the key elements to understanding this policy issue) (10%)
2. The ideology behind the policy or policy issue (i.e. How might this policy be understood and interpreted by different perspectives? What interests and positions are taken into consideration? What interests and considerations are excluded? Who benefits?) (10%)
3. An analysis of a policy or policy issue (i.e. What are the objectives a policy is attempting to meet? Does the policy achieve its goals? Is there any thing missing? Factors influencing its success or failure? How should this policy issue be understood? How you perceive this policy (positively, poorly etc.). Are there any notable problems with the policy? Important or good parts of it? What are some of the possible implications of the policy? What would alternative policies be?) (10%)

Each group will have 2 to 4 members (maximum). Although you are expected to work as a team (as you often do in a professional policy environment) and you will be assigned a mark as a group, you will each be required to take responsibility for one of the above questions. A small amount of class time will be provided for working on your presentation, but you will be expected to find additional time and means for working together as a team to complete this assignment. You will be marked on how thoroughly and thoughtfully you speak to the points listed above. You will be expected to hand in a one-page summary of your presentation.

Presentations will all occur in class on March 13, 2017

Assignment #3: Policy Paper (45%)

Write a policy report that does the following:

- Identifies an important policy issue
- Offers relevant research
- Examines how this research holds critical implications for the policy issue
- Offers recommended courses of action for government

The goal of this paper is to motivate government policy makers to address a specific social policy problem. Using a professional, concise, organized and logical, well-supported argument for your issue – you will demonstrate the problem and the reason for it to be addressed. You will outline several different policy options and make recommendations for the government to consider. It is highly recommended to be as specific as possible in your choice of issue. If you are unsure about selecting a topic, please speak with me about it in advance. Please draw on class handouts and class discussion concerning policy work. While a minimum of 6 academic sources are required, you will likely need to draw on other source material from community groups, think tanks, media and/or advocacy groups. This report is to be written relying on appropriate research and using full referencing of materials used in APA. Resources for citing publications and avoiding plagiarism are posted at <http://toby.library.ubc.ca/subjects/subpage2.cfm?id=673>. Please send your assignment to me by email as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf. file. All papers will be marked per a marking rubric provided to you in advance. The rubric are provided so the expectations for each assignment are explicitly clear. No matter how nice your work is - if it doesn't conform to the rubric, marks will be deducted.

Length: 13 to 15 pages maximum (excluding references & double spaced). I will not read past 15 pages.

Due: April 9th, 2017 at midnight by email

Class Participation & Homework (15%)

You will be given a grade based on your level of involvement and participation in class. In addition, chapters from your text, a range of different articles, podcasts and videos will be assigned. For each one, please hand in one short **typed** comment detailing what you took from the reading/video/podcast or a question that we can discuss as a group concerning anything that was unclear or that you wish to have clarified. You are expected to hand this in at the beginning of class. Homework not typed or provided to me late will not be accepted. Marks will be assigned based on the effort and consideration given to your questions.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance:

Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Please speak with me if you miss a class.

Disabilities and Religious Accommodations:

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with Access and Diversity. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds.

Retaining Assignments:

It is recommended that students retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked assignments with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The assignment remains the property of the university.

Academic Dishonesty:

Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

Grading Practices and ESL Students:

The School of Social Work’s Racialized Student Caucus recently developed a policy related to concerns for inequities in grading practices for ESL students. The policy provides specific guidelines for grading criteria and practices. Where possible, this policy will be applied within SOWK 501. Please meet with me if you would like to discuss the application of this policy in relation to your work.

Submitting Assignments:

Please submit your assignment to me by email. Please send it as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf. file. Hardcopies of assignments are not required.

Return of marked student assignments:

I will mark your assignment electronically with track changes and return it to you by the same email address that you sent it to me.

Late assignments:

All assignments are due **before class** on the date they are due. Late submissions will result to a deduction of the grade of your assignment. The rule of deduction is 2% a day. Any assignment that is more than one week late (7 days) will not be accepted. Extensions will only be granted in cases of personal illness or family issues and not because of academic or employment workloads or conflicts. Extensions must be requested in far advance of the due date of the assignment.

GRADING CRITERIA

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Point	
A+	90-100	95	Represents work of exceptional quality. Content, organization and style are all at a high level. Student demonstrates excellent research and reference to literature where appropriate. Also, student uses sound critical thinking, has innovative ideas on the subject and shows personal engagement with the topic.
A	85-89	87	
A-	80-84	82	
B+	76-79	77.5	Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses. Writing is clear and explicit and topic coverage and comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Good use of existing knowledge on the subject.
B	72-75	83.5	
B-	68-71	69.5	
C+	64-67	65.5	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but has some weaknesses in content, style and/or organization of the paper. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement in the work. Adequate use of literature.
C	60-63	62.5	
C-	55-59	57	

D	50-54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at a passing level. Serious flaws in content, organization and/or style. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement in the paper. Poor use of research and existing literature.
F	0-49		Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course or submitted beyond final date of acceptance for paper.

USEFUL WEBSITES

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy

An Ottawa-based research and advocacy group that has a sterling reputation for good research, political smarts, and has a wealth of publications dealing with Canadian social policy issues.

<http://www.caledoninst.org/>.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has a range of useful information, including statistical data, available on their website, particularly on poverty and disability. www.ccsd.ca

The C.D. Howe Institute does policy research on a wide range of topics. It very much reflects the interests of business and is generally regarded as having, politically, a liberal and 'right-of-centre' approach to policy studies and analysis. It has considerable influence in the making of Canadian policy – including social policy – and is therefore worth paying some attention to.

<https://www.cdhowe.org/>.

The Fraser Institute unabashedly advocates policies associated with neo-liberalism, and appealing to the extreme political right in Canada. Many of its ideas and positions could easily be associated with the Republican Party in the United States. It is based in Vancouver, and is worth taking a critical look at. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/>.

The National Council on Welfare has a number of useful reports on line. [The Harper Government eliminated the National Council on Welfare, but as of July 1, 2012, the council still had a web site and many reports noted on line. It has now been revived as a hub dealing with social policy issues by the Caledon Institute (above). See: <http://www.povnet.org/node/5099>.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives provides a number of useful studies, critiques and web links on a range of social policy issues.

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca>

Canadian Policy Research Networks has a number of excellent background papers and resources.

<http://www.cprn.com/>

Canadian Social Research Links has a searchable data base on social research and issues.

<http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/index.htm>