



The University of British Columbia

School of Social Work

Course Outline –SOWK 400 – Canadian Social Policy

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	Fall 2015
Course Title	SOWK 400 – Canadian Social Policy
Course Schedule	Monday, 1:00 – 4:00 pm (Term 1)
Course Location	Room 124 – Jack Bell Building (School of Social Work)

Instructor:	Patricia Johnston	Patricia.Johnston@ubc.ca
Teaching Assistant	Erika Ono	erikaono@alumni.ubc.ca
Office location	Room 104	
Office hours:	Monday, 12:00pm to 1:00pm	
Office phone	604-379-2465	

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course provides students with an understanding of the concepts and techniques of policy analysis, ideological and economics factors influencing policy and key structures, policies and issues in Canadian social policy and how social workers can effect policy change. This course will offer students an opportunity to develop a familiarity with some foundational concepts and paradigms in social policy and apply them in ‘real world’ analysis. After a brief overview of social policy responsibilities of various levels of government, the aim of the initial sections of the course is to familiarize students with basic concepts and theories essential to an informed and effective analysis. The latter sections will focus on specific areas of contemporary policy and ‘real world’ aspects of policy analysis, development and lobbying. The aim of the latter sections is to school students in the process and practice of analysis and to familiarize them with core social policy areas. Finally, the course aims to give students some understanding of how social workers and others can effect policy change. For reference, access to the full course outline is available from our website www.socialwork.ubc.ca.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the completion of this course students will be able to :

1. Summarize what social policy is and the ways social policy can be expressed in relation to social work;
2. Describe and assess some of the philosophical and ideological debates and perspectives informing social policy;
3. Identify and apply basic skills for policy analysis;

4. Recognize economic issues and systems influencing social policy;
5. Identify the impact of globalization on social policy in Canada;
6. Illustrate the importance of social policy to social work and how social workers can participate meaningfully in policy change;
7. Analyze one specific policy area.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT: Readings available on [UBC Connect](#).

OPTIONAL REFERENCE:

Blake, R. B. & Keshen, J. A. (Eds.) (2006). *Social fabric or patchwork quilt: The development of social policy in Canada*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press

Finkel, A. (2005). *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press

McKenzie, B. & Wharf, B. (2010). *Connecting Policy to Practice in the Human Services*, 2010. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Pal, L. (2001). *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*. 2nd ed. Nelson Thompson Learning.

Westhues, A. & Wharf, B. (Eds.) (2012). *Canadian Social Policy*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

EVALUATION:

- 1) **Participation/ Attendance:** 10%. Students are expected to complete the readings on a weekly basis prior to class and actively participate in class discussion.
- 2) **Assignment #1: Homework Assignment:** 10% Describe what social policy is and why it is important to you and to social work
- 3) **Assignment #2: Policy Brief:** 10%. Create a logical, clear and objective policy brief
- 4) **Assignment #3: Policy Article Review, Annotated Bibliography or Policy Analysis Presentation:** 25%. Choose one: Complete a 5 page Article Review **or** 5 page Annotated Bibliography **or** a 15-minute video presentation.
- 5) **Assignment #4: Written Policy Report:** 45%. Students will be required to select and examine a social policy issue and provide a detailed analysis in report form (maximum 3000 words).

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Each class will incorporate lectures, large and small group discussion or activities and opportunities for individual reflection. You are encouraged to share ideas, personal experiences, academic resources and perspectives to expand upon the topics discussed. My role as the instructor is to present the key theoretical frameworks necessary to facilitate critical inquiry. Curiosity and respectful dialogue are encouraged. Together we can create a safe and productive environment for learning.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS:

Date to be announced: Students are expected to attend the Dr. Richard Splane Lecture on Social Policy.

CLASS 1 Sept. 14:	Introduction to the course & What is social policy? An introduction to social policy
	Discussion to include: different ways in which policy is used, social policy, public policy and advocacy
Homework for next class	Homework: Complete Assignment #1 for next class Please read: Westhues, A. (2012). Chapter 1. Introduction: Becoming Acquainted with Social Policy. In A. Westhues & B. Wharf (Eds.), <i>Canadian Social Policy</i> (pp. 3-20). Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press. Please Watch: What is Social Policy? - Lecture by Professor Jonathan Bradshaw https://youtu.be/7zUv4bHdHMc (23 minutes)
CLASS 2 Sept. 21, 2015:	Why care about social policy? How is it relevant to social work? • <i>Assignment #1 due today</i>
	Discussion to include: policy analysis, ideology and interest groups Sign up for mid-term assignment today! Don't leave without selecting your due date for your assignments #2 and #4.
Homework for next class	Homework: Find a policy brief online and bring it in with you to next class Please read: Riches, G. (2002). Food Banks and Food Security: Welfare Reform, Human Rights and Social Policy. <i>Lessons from Canada?</i> 36(6), 648-663.
CLASS 3 Sept. 28, 2015	What is a social policy problem and where is policy made?
	Discussion to include: policy briefs, the division of responsibilities in Canada in relation to social policy and areas of concern for social policy, social policy problem definition, laws, policy and levels of government and government structure and function, who are the actors and how social policy is implemented.
Homework for next class	Homework: Work on your policy brief! Select a policy issue for your final paper and email me the topic. Please read: McKenzie, B. & Wharf, B. (2010). Chapter 1. Policy-Making and Policy-Makers. In B. McKenzie & B. Wharf (Eds.), <i>Connecting Policy to Practice in the Human Services</i> (pp. 1-29) Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. McNutt, J.G. (2010). Social work and social welfare policy in Canada: A consideration of major internet resources for research and practice, <i>Journal of Policy Practice</i> , 9(2), 154-159, DOI: 10.1080/15588741003601124

CLASS 4 Oct. 5, 2015	Common Debates in Social Policy & Policy writing styles
	<p>Discussion to include: common debates in social policy and policy writing styles, and strategies for influencing and making policy change.</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Chad Walters (MSM and Canadian Blood Services)</p>
CLASS 5 Oct. 19, 2015	Policy Analysis: What is policy analysis? How do you analyze policy? <i>Assignment #2 due today*</i>
	Discussion to include: models of policy analysis and practical principals.
Homework for next class	<p>Please watch: <i>The Remaining Light</i> available on the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) website (30 min) https://www.policyalternatives.ca/projects/seniors-care (to right of page at bottom)</p> <p>Please read: Hill, K. (2008). A strengths-based framework for social policy: Barriers and possibilities, <i>Journal of Policy Practice</i>, 7(2-3), 106-121.</p>
CLASS 6 Oct. 26, 2015	Theories influencing policy and policy making models <i>Assignment #2 due today*</i>
	Discussion to include: difference between theory and ideology, economic theories that underlie contemporary social policy, and common policy making models.
Homework for next class	<p>Please watch: http://globalnews.ca/video/2102696/is-10-dollar-childcare-possible-for-bc</p> <p>Please read: Ivanova, I. (2015). Solving BC's affordability crisis in child care: Financing the \$10 a day plan. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2015/07/ccpa-bc-solving-childcare-summary_0.pdf</p> <p>Johnston, L. (1996). <i>Ideologies: The Second Generation</i>. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, pp. 81-117.</p>
CLASS 7 Nov. 2, 2015	Dominant ideologies
	<p>Discussion to include: dominant ideologies & economic theories common to social policy such as neo-liberalism, Keynesianism and, post-modernism</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Iglia Ivanova, Senior Economist and Public Interest Researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (BC Office)</p>
Homework	Please read: Sinha, V. (2013). The structure of Aboriginal child welfare in Canada.

for next class	<i>The International Indigenous Policy Journal</i> , 4(2): 1-22.
CLASS 8 Nov. 9, 2015	Social Policy – locally, nationally and internationally (part 1) <i>Assignment #3 due today</i>
	Discussion to include: social policy in BC, Quebec and the United States, and social policy issues impacting Indigenous Canadians and women.
Homework for next class	Please read: Boyd, J., & Kerr, T. (2015). Policing ‘Vancouver’s mental health crisis’: a critical discourse analysis. <i>Critical Public Health</i> , (ahead-of-print), 1-16. doi:0.1080/09581596.2015.1007923 Orsini, M., & Smith, M. (2010). Social movements, knowledge and public policy: the case of autism activism in Canada and the US. <i>Critical Policy Studies</i> , 4(1), 38-57. doi: 10.1080/19460171003714989
CLASS 9 Nov. 16, 2015	Mental Health Policy
	Guest Speaker: Erika Ono – Mental Health Policy
Homework for next class	Please read: Levasseur, K. & Paterson, S. (2015). Jack (and Jill?) of all trades: A Canadian case study of equity in apprenticeship supports. <i>Social Policy & Administration</i> , Wallace, B. & Richards, T. (2012). Chapter 9. Policy Resistance: The rise and fall of welfare time limits in BC. Westhues, A. & Wharf, B. (Eds). <i>Canadian Social Policy</i> . Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
CLASS 10 Nov. 23, 2015	Social Policy – locally, nationally and internationally (part 2)
	Discussion to include: social policy in BC, Quebec and the United States, and social policy issues impacting Indigenous Canadians and women.
Homework for next class	Please read: Kershaw, Paul. 2015. “Population Aging, Generational Equity and the Middle-Class.” Vancouver, BC: Generation Squeeze. Kershaw, Paul and Lynell Anderson. 2015. “Measuring the Age Gap in Canadian Social Spending.” Vancouver, BC: Generation Squeeze. Please watch: #WildIdeas video: https://youtu.be/Qz9CvOnwYVE (8 minutes)
CLASS 11 Nov. 30, 2015	Policy Change: How can social workers engage in policy change?

	Guest Speaker: Paul Kershaw, UBC School of Population and Public Health, Interim Associate Director of UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) and founder of Generation Squeeze
	FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE ON DECEMBER 1st or DECEMBER 14th at 1pm

EVALUATION

1. Assignment #1: Homework

Describe what social policy is and why it is important to you and to social work. Provide two paragraphs (min 200 words, max 350 words)

- Paragraph 1) What is social policy? Why is social policy important to social work? In your own words! No references here please.
- Paragraph 2) Introduce yourself and your vocation (who you are, where you came from, what your interests are and where you hope to end up). Where does policy fit into your vocational path?

Value: 10%

Length: 200 to 350 words

Due: September 21st

2. Assignment #2: Policy Brief

Prepare a policy brief. The brief argues for or against a particular way of delivering a specific policy. This should include a range of options (normally 3) and can include a position against any such policy altogether and/or the creation of new policy (set out policy responses to the policy issue or problem). The purpose of a policy briefing is to provide a decision-maker with a summary document to inform her or his decision-making on a policy matter. A briefing document is intended to be clear, logical, concise, objective, balanced, and analytical.

Identify a policy issue and define the problem that the Minister needs to make a decision on. You will NOT be graded on whether your policy brief reflects current or actual policy, or politics. The policy briefing can be based on a hypothetical situation. This assignment's goals are to demonstrate your understanding of core concepts and your application of basic policy analysis skills, rather than an in-depth knowledge of the policy under consideration. Your brief should not be longer than three pages. APA referencing is expected.

Value: 10%

Length: 500 to 750 words

Due: October 19th or October 26th – Your choice

3. Assignment #3: Policy Article Review, Annotated Bibliography or Policy Analysis Presentation

Each student will choose one of three possible options for this assignment. These assignments are designed to move you towards a greater understanding of the policy issue you've selected for your final assignment. You may choose to complete a:

- 1) A 5 page Article Review; or

- 2) A 5 page Annotated Bibliography; or
- 3) A 20-minute Presentation (group size max 4 people).

For each assignment you will be required to select a social policy problem or issue. If it is not an obvious social policy issue, you should be prepared to defend your selection. If you are confused, please speak with me well in advance of the due date.

Value: 25%

Due: November 9th

- 1) The **5 Page Policy Article Review** requires you introduce two articles on a particular social policy issue or problem. You must summarize the main points or research within the articles, describe and state what the articles propose, what questions are raised and/or what results or conclusions are presented. You must also indicate why you selected the articles and provide a concise critique highlighting the successes and limitations of each. The articles must be selected so as to further your understanding on the social policy issue. These must be academic articles pertaining to a social policy issue. If you are unsure whether you have selected an appropriate article(s), please make sure to discuss this with me. If you are unsure how to access academic articles, please speak with me and I'll give you a hand.
- 2) The **5 Page Annotated Bibliography** requires you select up to 10 sources (minimum) regarding a particular social policy issue. This must be a range of different sources including newspaper articles, policy reports, and other documents prepared by think tanks or government and non-government agencies. Some of these must be academic articles (a minimum of 4). For each source a concise summary describing the central idea of the article is required. Successes and limitations of each source should be clearly identified in order to establish an insightful understanding of the social policy issue. Each source should be numbered from 1 to 10. Each source should be referenced in APA. For example:

- 1) Westhues, A. (2012). Chapter 1. Introduction: Becoming Acquainted with Social Policy. In A. Westhues & B. Wharf (Eds.), *Canadian Social Policy* (pp. 3-20). Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

This chapter by Westhues points to the importance of....

- 3) The **15-minute Presentation** requires you get in groups of up to 4 people. Choose a social policy problem or issue that interests you and prepare a 15-minute presentation. Record your presentation and send it via email. This will be a timed presentation. I will only watch to the 15-minute mark – no matter how good it is! The presentation is to provide the audience with a good understanding of the problem or issue. You are expected to do basic background research and provide a succinct analysis. You will be expected to find time and means for working together as a team outside of class to complete this assignment. You will be marked as a team. Your presentation may be shown to the class.

4. Assignment #4: Written Policy Report

Write a policy report that has the intent to advocate for a particular policy position in the 'real world'. Imagine that you would send this policy report to the Minister in 'real life' to influence the policy agenda. Choose a specific area of interest/concern and provide a detailed analysis of the policy/policies. It is highly recommended to be as specific as possible in your choice of issue, and to state your case clearly and succinctly. If you are

unsure about your issue, please speak with me about it in advance. This report is to be written in an academic style, relying on appropriate research and using full referencing of materials used. Reports will be marked based on depth, argumentation and overall writing style. Please send your assignment to me by email as a .doc, .docx, or .rtf. file.

While use of academic sources are encouraged/recommended, you will likely need to draw on other source material from community groups, think tanks, media and/or advocacy groups. Please properly cite all sources as per Academic regulations (APA). This report may build on work from Assignment 1 or 2, but must NOT be a reiteration of previous work and MUST include your own individual analysis and additional sources. Subject resources for citing publications and avoiding plagiarism are posted at <http://toby.library.ubc.ca/subjects/subjpage2.cfm?id=673>

Value: 45%

Due: December 1st or December 14th – your choice.

Length: 3000 words maximum (excluding references). *Please email your paper in .doc or .docx or .rtf format*

5. Participation and Attendance

Expectations will be reviewed in class.

Value 10%

COURSE POLICIES [attendance, participation, academic dishonesty]:

Attendance:

Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.).

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.

ASSIGNMENTS

Submitting Assignments-

Please submit your assignment to me by email. Please cc' Erika. Please send it as a .doc,.docx, or .rtf. file.

Return of marked student assignments:

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

Late assignments:

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 a week late will not be accepted. Extensions will only be granted for exceptional circumstances. Extensions must be requested in advance of the due date of the assignment.

GRADING CRITERIA

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Point	
A+ A A-	90-100 85-89 80-84	95 87 82	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.
B+ B B-	76-79 72-75 68-71	77.5 83.5 69.5	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.
C+ C C-	64-67 60-63 55-59	65.5 62.5 57	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.
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

Federal Government:

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) produces a wealth of material on Government Policy and Research. These can be accessed at:

<http://www.hrsc.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml> and http://www.socialunion.gc.ca/menu_e.html

BC Government Websites:

Search Engine: <http://www.bcconnects.gov.bc.ca/>

Statistics: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/>

Government's main site: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/>

MCFD: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/>

Aboriginal Reconciliation and Relations: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/index.html>

Housing and Social Development: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/hsd/index.html>

Health: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/healthservices/>

Community Living British Columbia <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/>

Other useful Websites:

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy is 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 Counsel on Social Development has a range of useful information, including statistical data, available on their website, particularly on poverty and disability. www.ccsd.ca

And the National Council on Welfare similarly has a number of useful reports. [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.] www.ncwcnbes.net

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 database on social research and issues. <http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/index.htm>