

**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 and Winter, 2015 - 16
Course Title	SOWK 501 - Canadian Social Policy (3 credits)
Course Schedule	Mondays, 6 - 9 pm (Term 2)
Course Location	Room 223 – Jack Bell Building (School of Social Work)

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	e-mail address
Frank Tester	Jack Bell 241	778-875-3595	frank.test@ubc.ca
Office Hours	Monday 1 – 4 pm or by appointment (e-mail me or see me in class).		

**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 policy in areas of interest to students. Students can explore and deal with issues and problems related to their interests through presentations, papers, book reviews, film and discussion.

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 Aboriginal peoples, income distribution, affirmative action for disabled peoples or the provision of social housing. Some policy areas (i.e. child welfare) are addressed in other courses offered in the programme and will not be addressed in this course

The first class of this course is a design exercise. For this reason it is essential that all students enrolled be present for the first class. The idea of the seminar is to introduce the student to definitions of social policy and discuss course content.

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**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 TEXTS:**

**Required (Available for purchase in the UBC Bookstore)**

Westhues, Anne & Brian Wharf, 2012, *Canadian Social Policy* (5<sup>th</sup> edition), Waterloo Canada, Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Canadian Social Policy Reading Package. SOWK 501. (Available from the UBC Bookstore.)

**Other Suggested Texts**

This is a list of texts dealing with Canadian social policy and a number of other resources that suggest 'new horizons' for the focus of social work in a globalized world.

Armitage, Andrew. 2003. *Social Welfare in Canada* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press.

Blake, Raymond and Jeffrey Keshen (eds.). *social fabric or patchwork quilt: The Development of Social Policy in Canada*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Finkel, Alvin. 2012. *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Graham, John, Karen Swift and Roger Delaney. 2012. *Canadian Social Policy: An Introduction*. Toronto: Pearson.

Gray, Mel, John Coates and Tiana Hetherington (eds.). 2013. *Environmental Social Work*. London: Routledge.

Guest, Dennis. 1997. *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Harvey, David. 2010. *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hick, Steven. 2014. *Social Welfare in Canada: Understanding Income Security (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Toronto: Thompson.

Hoff, Marie, John McNutt. 1994. *The Global Environmental Crisis: Implications for Social Welfare and Social Work*. Brookfield VT: Avebury.

Lightman, Ernie. 2002. *Social Policy in Canada*. Toronto, Oxford University Press.

Lundy, Colleen. 2011. *Social Work, Social Justice and Human Rights: A Structural Approach to Practice*. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.

McKenzie, Brad and Brian Wharf. 2010. *Connecting Policy to Practice in the Human Services*. Don Mills Ontario, Oxford University Press.

Mowforth, Martin. 2014. *The Violence of Development: Resource Depletion, Environmental Crises and Human Rights Abuses in Central America*. London: Pluto Press.

Pulkingham, Jane and Gordon Ternowetsky. 1996. *Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s*. Halifax, Fernwood.

Rice, James J. and Michael Prince. 2013. *Changing Politics of Canadian Social Policy*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.

Steinstra, Deborah. 2012. *About Canada: Disability Rights*. Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood.

Tester, Frank, Chris McNiven & Robert Case, 1996, *Critical Choices, Turbulent Times: A companion reader on Canadian social policy reform*, Vancouver, The School of Social Work, UBC.

Titmus, Richard. 1970. *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*. London: Allen and Unwin.

Zapf, Michael. 2009. *Social Work and the Environment: Understanding People and Place*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

## 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.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/home.shtml> and  
[http://www.socialunion.gc.ca/menu\\_e.html](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**

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](http://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>

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

A class schedule will be produced after the first class has met, and adjusted if necessary to accommodate student presentations and interests.

**Please purchase and look at the text before the first class.**

The format for this will be presentations and group or class discussion. Reading for the class is therefore important.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Students are to hand in a contract in which they specify what they will be doing a other than the book review. The contract must include (1) the name and, if agreeable to the student, a contact email (2) a list of the activities or materials to be submitted for credit (3) a brief (2 or 3 sentence) description of each item (4) an indication of the percentage of the grade to be associated with each (5) a due date for each item.

The due date is important and as this is a contract, is a commitment to submit the item or complete the task on the date given. 8% will be deducted for late assignments.

- 15% of the grade is reserved for participation and contribution to the class. This means that reading for the course, and attendance are important.
- The remaining grade (85%) can be distributed among a minimum of three other learning experiences. The percent assigned to each of the three (or more) assignments must be commensurate with the effort put into the assignments.
- One of these assignments must be a book review. Students can chose from the list of other resources presented above, or another text if approved by the instructor.

## **Options**

(1) Book Review

Chose a text from the list provided above. Write a professional review of the text. If you want some idea of possible styles and handling of content, I suggest you look at the New York Times Review of Books. Your review should be no more than 1500 words. Some considerations (and one doesn't need to address all of these) are: A brief introduction to the book. What it is covered? What approach does the author take? How is it organized? Who is the author – background, expertise, reputation, etc.? What did the author(s) do well? Is the book well-written? Is it interesting? Why? Why not? Is it, given the way it is organized and/or written, accessible? What is missing (if anything) from the coverage of the issue in question? What do you think of the perspective or approach taken by the writer(s)? Who might benefit from reading or using it? If you were writing a book, what would you do differently?

(2) Class Participation (15%) We will be addressing different aspects of social policy from week to week. When readings are assigned, each student is to come to class with 2 questions they have, based on the readings (with a page and paragraph reference), and is to note at least 1 matter arising from the readings that was unclear or that they wish to clarify. These should be written out, include the student's name, and handed in to the instructor.

(3) At least two other submissions

There are a number of options and the instructor is open to other suggestions not included here.

- (a) Presentation. You may make an individual or group presentation to class on a policy topic or area of interest. The effort and contribution should be commensurate with the effort that you put into the presentation. Some things to pay attention to include focusing the presentation, the use of AV materials, class involvement in the learning experience.
- (b) Discussion. You may wish to invite someone – or a number of people - to join you in class in discussing a policy topic from different points of view.
- (c) A Paper. Chose a topic (a newspaper scramble might be useful for doing this). You can produce a conventional academic paper or you may wish to try a different focus. For example, how has the press covered the topic that interests you? What has been the historical coverage (You can go back as far as you like or arbitrarily limit the scope to, for example, the past 10 – or 2 – years.) You might want to compare and contrast a number of articles published by different policy think tanks on the topic, for example, how the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has addressed the topic, compared to anything published by the C.D. Howe Institute or the Fraser Institute. I am open to the focus of your paper and willing to discuss any ideas with you.
- (d) A Poster. Prepare a poster presentation dealing with a policy issue (3 panels) and submit, with it, a brief paper (2000 words) that outlines (1) the history of the issue

(2) the existing or current policy with respect to the issue (2) where you think policy needs to go or what needs to change.

(e) Review of a Policy Document or Report. Canadian policy research institutes (for example, the Caledon Institute or the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, etc.) from time to time produce major reports dealing with the status of policy issues nationally or provincially or in relation to the territories. Take one of these documents (search on line) and review it. Describe and refer to the content. Given the reader an idea of what you learned from reading it. Is there anything in particular, to be found in the content that attracted your attention? Why? What (realistically) do you think needs to happen to address an issue or issues raised by the document or report? Etc.

(f) A Film Review. Chose a film that deals with a Canadian or international social policy issue. Do a review of the film. For examples of film reviews, refer to the Georgia Strait, The Globe and Mail or the New York Times.

With regard to all work, social work is very much a practice where effective (clear, understandable and helpful) communication is vitally important to being effective. I will deduct up to 15% from submitted material for grammar, spelling, and organizational issues.

## Grading

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.

## COURSE POLICIES [attendance, participation, academic dishonesty]:

Excerpt from the UBC calendar:

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“Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

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 examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The examination 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](http://www.arts.ubc.ca) and go to the students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.”

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