

MINI PAPER ASSIGNMENTS
(to be used in conjunction with Syllabus)

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Social Welfare Policy & Services I

ALL your papers are based on the readings found on the syllabus. Most of the assigned readings are on E-RESERVES or available Online (OL), directly from your syllabus. A few books or journals are on reserve in the SSW library. There are 1 or 2 books that you may want to buy. There is no textbook.

MINI-PAPERS The following series of 13 Mini-Papers are intended to (1) develop an understanding of the basic concepts, principles, and themes of social welfare policy and services; (2) to promote your informed classroom activity as active participants and listeners; and (3) to develop skills in identifying and distilling key ideas and expressing them concisely. The 5 mini-papers that you write comprise your written work for the class. There is no term paper.

Mini Papers and Class Discussion Whether or not you write a mini-paper, come to class prepared to discuss the readings. The recommended number of article to read per unit on the syllabus is for class participation. For the mini paper, you will need to *read more than the number of articles* recommended.

Mini- Paper Due Date

Each mini-paper is due **THE DAY THE TOPIC IS SCHEDULED FOR CLASS**. I will let you know each week if a paper is due the following week. At the end of each class when a mini-paper is due you ***will be asked to hand in your mini-paper OR a note saying you are exempting yourself from that paper*** (include your name, date, and the Unit Topic and number.)

Mini- Paper Directions

- 1 Of the 13 Mini Paper assignments, you will be expected to write five. Of the 5 mini-papers, two are required: Unit I (Defining Social Policy and the Social Welfare System) and Unit XIII (Policy Meets Practice: Changing Social Welfare Policy). You may select the three other mini-papers from any of the remaining units. All papers except the first one will be graded (SSW uses a Credit, No Credit, Honors system).
2. The Mini-Paper assignments are listed by unit number that also appear on the syllabus. The Unit numbers for each mini-paper correspond directly to the unit numbers on the course syllabus.
3. All the readings that you need to complete each mini paper will be found on the syllabus for the relevant unit. No other research is needed.
4. Each Mini-Paper includes several questions for you to address. You can answer the questions separately or integrate them into a single essay as long as you cover all the points.
5. Please include citation (author, date) when discussing ideas that represent or directly quote a particular author Include a reference list at the end of the paper articles cited.
6. Each Mini-Paper should be from 4-5 double-spaced typed pages except for the last paper (Unit X), which should be 5-7 pages.
7. If you cannot submit a typed paper, very neatly hand-written papers will be accepted. If you choose this option, used lined paper and skip lines to facilitate legibility. Hand-written papers must be an equivalent length to a typed paper. One double-spaced typewritten page is about 250 words

THE MINI PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

UNIT I. Defining Social Welfare Policy and the Social Welfare System

This unit provides descriptive information about basic social welfare programs and concept that you may or may not be familiar with. Review to get acquainted with these programs and concepts that will be reference throughout the course.

1. Based on the Midgley and Social Welfare Concepts (power point) write a brief definition of social welfare policy that makes sense to you at this point. Distinguish between the Institutional and Residual Models, and universal and selective programs, providing definitions and examples of each.

2. What do the articles by NASW, Lieberman, Reese add to our understanding of social welfare policy?
3. The core of the US social welfare system consists (a) Social Insurance programs (Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Medicare, etc.) and (b) Public Assistance programs (AFDC/TANF, Food Stamps (SNAP), Medicaid etc.). The Social Insurance and Public Assistance programs serve different populations and represent very different social welfare philosophies (which program is Institutional and which is Residual?)
 - a. Drawing on Tussing's article and the other readings discuss why the Social Insurance programs are more popular than public assistance programs. Include several of the ways that Tussing distinguishes between these two types of programs
 - b. After you understand the difference between social insurance and public assistance programs, ask someone you know (*who is not otherwise informed about social welfare policy*) what they think about "Social Security" (social insurance) and "welfare" (i.e. public assistance) and why? How did their comments compare to Tussing's observations? (Don't tell them what you've read until after you heard from them).
4. How did the definitions of **social policy and human rights** (see especially articles, 22,23, 2 of Declaration of Human Rights (DHR) presented in the readings compare to your own ideas prior to writing this mini-paper. I
5. Identify two facts, statements, or points in the readings that either surprised, interested, or disturbed you and indicate why.

UNIT II. Ideological Perspectives or Welfare State Frameworks

Ideas about the role and function of the welfare state vary widely across the political spectrum.

1. Take the Typology Quiz on the proper role of government in relation to social policy. What did the quiz tell you about your own ideological view on these issues. How do your views compare with that of the general public also provided in the quiz.
2. Mullaly (pp. 70-137) and Abramovitz compare various ideological perspectives. Drawing on both readings select three perspectives. For each one briefly discuss the assumptions about (a) human nature, (b) the role of the government in society, (c) the causes of social problems and (d) the view of social welfare.
3. View the YOUTUBE examples of public figures that hold these varied views. How did they help you understand the perspectives presented by Mullaly
4. Discuss your own reactions to the different frameworks presented in these readings and videos. What was new to you?
5. Which perspective would you like to see social work follow and why?

UNIT III. The Welfare State Today

The U-Turn. Abramovitz explains the changes in the welfare state since the mid-1970s as a U-Turn in Public Policy. She argues that since the mid-1970s, the US has sought to "undo" the New Deal (1930s), the Great Society (1960s) and replace them with another paradigm. The new paradigm which arose in response to the economic crisis in the mid-1970s variously called Reaganomics, Supply-Side Economics, Conservatism and Neoliberalism.

1. Drawing on the Economic Literacy Curriculum, Abramovitz (2014) and Amott (1993) (section III-A).
 - a. Discuss your understanding of the economic crisis of the mid-1970s and its relationship to the rise of Neoliberalism
 - b. Define neoliberalism, its main goals and strategies of Neoliberalism (in relation to the US welfare state).
2. Both critics and advocates of Neoliberalism define this term/ paradigm (Unit III B1 & 2) Drawing these write a brief definition of Neoliberalism.
3. Readings in section III-B 1 and 2 also present arguments for and against Neoliberalism. Present two arguments in favor of Neoliberalism (Brooks and Bush) and two arguments against Neoliberalism (Monbiot, Candace, Martinez/Garcia and George).
4. Define and discuss Naomi Klein's Shock Doctrine (Section III-C): How did the nation's leaders apply "Shock Doctrine" to build support for the supported the paradigm shift represented by what Abramovitz calls the U-Turn in public policy

UNIT IV. The U-Turn In Social Welfare Policy: Focus on Taxes

1. Discuss two main points of tax history made by Abramovitz and Morgan (Unit IVA)
2. Identify several different types of taxes that we all pay. Include the levels of government associated with each tax and the difference between progressive, proportional and regressive taxes. Provide examples. (Unit IV B),
3. Discuss Tax policies (cuts) as a Neoliberal Strategy. What impact do they have on the role of government and social programs? Why is this important to social work? (Unit IV C).

- Unit IV D and Unit IV E discuss two key issues related to “tax fairness.” Discuss “Are US taxes too high? **OR** “How Progressive is the US tax system?”
- Drawing on the debate in Unit IV, discuss what *you* think of the fairness of the tax system. As a social worker would you argue for more tax cuts or tax increases and why?

Unit V. The U-Turn In Social Welfare Policy: Focus on Spending Policies

- Discuss where “the money” (i.e. tax revenues) goes. How do we spend our tax dollars? Include different types of spending (i.e., mandatory spending, discretionary spending, and tax expenditures) and identify the kinds of programs in each category.
- Discuss how current spending cuts impact the role and size of government and the scale and scope of social welfare programs
- Compare and contrast the federal budget plans proposed by Republican, Democrats and the Progressive Caucus. in relation to (1) goals and priorities, (2) the role of the government, (3) and spending for programs that assist low-income households.
- Indicate what you learned about social policy from this review of government spending and federal budget proposals. What surprised you and why?
- Discuss how you think today’s budget debate might affect your agency. Ask staff who have been at the agency for a while for their view.

UNIT VI: Neoliberal Privatization

- Define privatization as a Neoliberal Strategy. Discuss its impact on the role and size of the government and provide some examples health and human services. (Unit VIA).
- Discuss the pros and cons of Privatization in general (Unit VIB)
- Privatization is spreading rapidly in the human services and remains highly controversial. Discuss the arguments for and against privatization in one of the policy area listed on the syllabus (Unit VIC)
- Indicate what you learned about social policy from this unit, especially the debates. What surprised you and why?
- .Discuss how you think the current trend toward privatization is affecting your agency. Ask staff who have been at the agency for a while for their view.

UNIT VII: Neoliberalism and Managerialism in Human Services

- Abramovitz and Zelnick discuss Managerialism as the one stage in the privatization of the US Welfare State . More specifically they view Managerialism as the “operationalization” of Privatization within human service agencies. Define and discuss managerialism as well as marketization and financialization as presented by these authors.
- Abramovitz and Zelnick argue that the introduction of managerialism (also referred to as New Public Management or NPM) and the “business model” is affecting the ability of front line workers to carry out their jobs and agencies to deliver quality services. Draw on Abramovitz and Zelnick article and two other articles in this unit ad write discuss of the impact of managerialism in the human services
- In addition to the above “interview” one or two front line staff and/or program managers at your agency (who have been there for at least three years) about these trends. Based on the readings and the interviews, discuss if and how these trends are affecting the provision of services working conditions, the client-worker relationship and the well-being of clients.

UNIT VIII: The Social Welfare System--Who Benefits? Who Loses?

Popular wisdom holds that money for government programs goes only to the poor. But, in fact, these government dollars serve many non-poor individuals and organizations.

- Abramovitz, Mettler, and Plumer claim that "everyone is on welfare" Discuss this argument. Did it surprise you? Why do you think the public believes that *only* the poor benefit from government spending?
- From “Who Benefits?” Discuss two of the three groups listed in this section who *benefit* from social welfare policy and how and why they benefit.

3. From “Who Loses? Discuss two of the six groups listed in the section on *who loses* from social welfare policy and how and why they lose.
4. Indicate some ways that you or people you know have benefited and/or lost from the social welfare system. (You may want to ask you parents, relatives, or friends what government programs they have used and find out what difference if any, it made in their lives).
5. Identify the population *served by your agency* and indicate how clients benefit or lose from your program and more generally from government social welfare policy.

UNIT IX: Poverty Who's Poor and Why?

1. *Poverty and You!* Review the Map of NYC, take the interactive minimum wage quiz, and view the 4- minute video. What is your reaction to the poverty level in your neighborhood? How did your budget fare in relation to minimum wage? What did the video add to add to your understanding of poverty?

2. The Poverty Line:

- a. Who's Poor? Review the data re: who is poor in the USA (No question on this).
- b. Ask the following Gallop Poll question to two people you know but who are not necessarily knowledgeable about poverty lines and poverty policy, etc.

Tell them: “*People are considered poor if they live below the established federal poverty line.*” Then ask them “*What amount of annual income would you use as a poverty line for a family of four (husband, wife, two children) living in this community?*”

- c. How does their answer compare to the official (US government) 2016 poverty line of \$24,300 family of four) and to the Sufficiency Standard (2010)? (Pick a borough)
- d. Discuss the difference between their estimate, the poverty line, and the Self-Sufficiency Standard with them.
- e. How close did they come.? Indicate their reaction as well as your own to any discrepancies that emerged.
- f. Ask them why they think the poor are poor. Compare explanations included in the readings for this unit

3. Causes of Poverty

There is more than one way to explain the cause of poverty. Briefly identify and summarize the causes of poverty discussed based on the Jordan article as well as two readings from the section on “individual causes of poverty” and two readings from section on the Structural Causes of Poverty Which “cause” of poverty do you think best explains the poverty faced by one of your clients (or someone you know) and why?

4. Neoliberalism and Poverty: Punishing the Poor

- a. According to Wacquant what is the punitive regulation of the poor and what explains its rise?
- b. The punitive response to poverty is widespread in the US today. Discuss these practices in Prisons (Dolan) and one other area.
- c. Looking at your own agency (or another one you are familiar with), think about its rules and regulation as well as staff and leadership attitudes and views . Do you see subtle or overt policies or trends that might qualify” punishing the poor

UNIT X: Neoliberalism and Inequality

1. The data shows that inequality has reached record highs. Review the trends and provide some evidence to support this claim using the measures described in part 2 of this unit, including public opinion polls.
2. The material in unit X-C- Gordon and Stiglitz -review the causes of inequality. Select and discuss two causes of inequality
3. The growing gap between the rich and the poor has become part of the everyday policy discourse and led to a national debate as to whether or not inequality is a problem. Drawing on these readings in Unit D and explain why “Inequality Matters.” That is summarize and discuss two of four problems associated with inequality included on the syllabus Indicate where you stand in this debate and why.
4. Unit E speaks to Taking Action to combat Inequality. Select two policy changes that make sense to you and explain

UNIT XI: Racism and Social Welfare Policy

Racism has been a major and divisive factor in electoral politics and in the development of social welfare policy.

1. The readings in Unit XI-A define and discuss the structure and operation of racism in general. Write a brief essay that discusses that meaning of race and the difference between prejudice, racial discrimination, and institutionalized (structural) racism. Also discuss. Exclusionary Rules, Inclusionary Rules. Non- Rules and their relationship to Racism (see Flynn)
2. The readings in Unit XI-B1 examine how racism affects the wellbeing of persons of color. Many points are made. Select two discuss the impact of racism on wellbeing.
- 3 The readings in Unit XI-B2 examine the impact of racism in various social welfare policy areas. Select one policy issue and discuss racism in that area
4. Taking Action Unit XI-C Identify two point made by Flynn that speak to next steps
5. Thinking of you own agency, how does racism affect its practices, programs and policies? Do not identify the agency by name, but do indicate the type of service it provides.

UNIT XII: Sexism, Heterosexism and Social Policy

The majority of social work clients and workers are women. Women are also over-represented among the poor. Nonetheless, social welfare policy does not always meet the needs of women effectively.

1. Based on the reading in Unit XII-A, write a brief overview essay that defines and discusses sexism and heterosexism in social welfare policy.
2. The readings in Unit XII-B look at how sexism and heterosexism shape social welfare policy. Select two issues and discuss how sexism and heterosexism affects social welfare policy,
3. Explain why homophobia and sexism are bad for the economy (see Ferro and Aziz).
4. Based on the readings and your own observations of a social agency with which you are familiar, describe any evidence you see of sexist practices (identify the agency by type but not by name).

UNIT XIII: Policy Meets Practice: Changing the Social Welfare System (5-7 pgs)

Select an advocacy or policy/action group known to you, or in which you are interested. Based on interviews the group's leaders/members and any written or online material about the agency that is available, describe the group, its goals, the main policy issues that it addresses, how it goes about seeking social change, and its success and failures. What is their vision for future in relation to their goals? *Integrate one of two readings assigned for this unit into your discussion.*

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