

**PACIFIC UNIVERSITY  
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM  
SOCWK/POLS 351: Social Policy & Social Justice  
Fall 2015**

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**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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**Location:** Marsh 214  
**Time:** T/TH, 1-2:35 pm

Dr. Jessica Ritter  
Office: Marsh 232  
503.352.2742  
[jritter@pacificu.edu](mailto:jritter@pacificu.edu)

**Office Hours:** Mondays noon-1pm; Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 pm; and by appointment.

**Students are welcomed and encouraged to contact the Instructor with any questions or concerns about this course**

**PREREQUISITES**

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SOCWK 201 with a minimum grade of C- for social work majors. No prerequisite for other majors.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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*In these times of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must and shall choose the path of social justice, the path of faith, the path of hope and the path of love toward our fellow men.*

~Franklin Delano Roosevelt, October 2, 1932

*Freedom is the right to share, share fully and equally, in American society: to vote, to hold a job, to enter a public place, to go to school. It is the right to be treated in every part of our national life as a person equal in dignity and promise to all others. But freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying, "Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please. You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "You are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.*

~President Lyndon Johnson, June 4, 1965

*Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.*

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This course provides an examination of both the historical and contemporary context of social policies, programs, and legislation. It provides an analysis of various social welfare policies and the ways in which legislation is developed, enacted, and implemented in our society, including how policies have emerged in response to social problems at the local, national, and international levels. It explores and assesses existing policies and programs with particular emphasis on how they impact vulnerable and at-risk populations. Social welfare policy will be investigated as a dimension of generalist social work practice and the course will include content related to human diversity, social and economic justice, and political advocacy as a means to achieving social and political change. U.S. social welfare policy will be examined in a global and human rights context.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify how social welfare policies and programs are developed, implemented, analyzed, and evaluated in the U.S.
- Understand how social welfare policies and legislation influence the social delivery system in the U.S.
- Analyze social problems and the relationship between problem analysis and the enactment of social policies.

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- Use scientific methodology to gather data and analyze policy alternatives.
- Identify the positions and activities of key players in support of or opposition to various social policies
- Assess the impact of various social welfare policies on diverse populations and populations at risk (i.e., children, women, those living in poverty, ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, older adults, those with mental or physical disabilities, etc.)
- Examine social work values and ethics in relation to the implementation of social welfare policies
- Develop self-awareness by challenging one's own values and attitudes in relation to pressing social problems and proposed policy solutions
- Develop political advocacy skills that are needed to promote social change and advance social and economic justice
- Identify current policies and advocacy groups in the areas of child welfare, mental health, health care, income and poverty, aging, education, immigration, human rights, race, gender, and sexual orientation

**CSWE COMPETENCIES & PRACTICE BEHAVIORS**

COMPETENCY	PRACTICE BEHAVIOR	ASSIGNMENT (MEASURE)
Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly	Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication.	Legislative Testimony Assignment
Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments	Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.	Legislative Testimony Assignment
Advance human rights and social and economic justice	Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.	Legislative Testimony Assignment Fact Sheet Assignment
Advance human rights and social and economic justice	Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.	Legislative Testimony Assignment Fact Sheet Assignment
Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	Analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.	Policy Brief Assignment Fact sheet assignment
Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.	Legislative Testimony Assignment Fact Sheet Assignment

**VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

Readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments include content on vulnerable populations including women, children, older adults, and racial, ethnic and sexual minorities. Vulnerable persons are those who are intentionally or unintentionally discriminated against because of one or more attributes or statuses, which are not valued by the dominant society. Vulnerable persons are at risk of social isolation and economic disadvantage and other consequences because of the pervasive effects of structural inequality and lack of access to power. Vulnerable persons are represented in class readings and discussions.

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Attendance and participation are crucial to your learning, the learning of others and the maximization of all teaching methods used. Since social work is a profession as well as an academic discipline, it is important to your future clients that you do not miss too many classes. Students who miss class (or arrive late to class) frequently will be penalized in the class

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participation portion of their grade. **Missing more than 5 classes can result in being penalized a full letter grade or failure of the course.**

Students are responsible for any changes in the course outline or assignments that may be announced when they are absent. If you must miss a class, it is advisable to contact a classmate prior to the next class. "Not knowing" about changes will not be regarded as an acceptable excuse for not keeping current with class assignments.

Therefore, class involvement and attendance will be seriously considered when assigning grades. Students are expected to attend all classes on time and to develop and demonstrate their knowledge through class discussions. The primary teaching approach in this course will be collaborative learning. Collaborative learning involves student/student and student/instructor dialogue and interaction in terms of guiding the discussion.

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**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

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Strong writing skills are crucial for social workers. All written materials submitted in this class will be evaluated on content as well as construction, grammar, spelling, and usage. If writing is a challenge for you, you are encouraged to get seek outside help. On campus resources include the Writing Center and the Tutoring Center.

For this course, assignments will not be accepted via email unless a student receives special permission from the Instructor. Papers and presentations are due on the assigned dates and will not be accepted late. A computer crash or printing failure are not regarded as acceptable excuses for late assignments.

Students are expected to demonstrate proper behavior in the classroom in order to not impact other students in a negative manner. Social work practitioners respect others. Therefore, differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected.

Cell phones should be silenced during class. Texting during class is not allowed. Laptops should be used only for class purposes such as taking notes.

**Students are welcome and encouraged to contact the Instructor with any questions or concerns.** A positive relationship between the student and the Instructor is important. Constructive comments about the course are welcomed since this course will be viewed as a joint effort between the student and the Instructor. The Instructor will be available to students during office hours and by appointment. Students may also contact the Instructor by telephone or email. At the end of the semester, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the course and the Instructor.

**Students are expected to arrive to class on time prepared to participate in lively discussion and class activities. Completion of all assigned readings and assignments prior to class is expected.**

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**LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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If you have documented challenges that will impede your learning in any way, please contact our LSS office in Clark Hall (ext.2717; [lss@pacificu.edu](mailto:lss@pacificu.edu)). LSS staff will meet with students, review the documentation of their disabilities, and discuss the services that Pacific offers and any appropriate ADA accommodations for specific courses.

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**TUTORING AND LEARNING CENTER (TLC)**

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The TLC is located in Scott Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The center focuses on delivering one-on-one and group tutoring services for foreign languages, math and science courses and writing skills in all subjects. Students should consult with the center's director for information on tutoring available for other subjects. Day and evening hours; walk-ins welcome!

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**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

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Pacific University has no tolerance for academic misconduct/cheating. It is university policy that all acts of misconduct and dishonesty be reported to the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs. Sanctions that may be imposed for such misconduct range from an “F” for the assignment, an “F” for the course, and suspension or dismissal from the university. Forms of academic misconduct include but are not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, tampering with grades, forging signatures, and using electronic information resources in violation of acceptable use policies.

**Plagiarism** is the use of someone else's words, ideas, or data without proper documentation or acknowledgment; it may entail self-plagiarism, i.e. reusing/resubmitting your own work without approval. Quotations must be clearly marked, and sources of information must be clearly indicated in all student work.

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**UNAUTHORIZED RECORDINGS**

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Students are prohibited from making audio and/or visual recordings of lectures or presentations without prior consent of the instructor or presenter.

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**PAPER GRADING RUBRIC**

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**“A” (Exemplary)** – “A” papers are professional in appearance; have no typos and use correct grammar, sentence structure, and spelling. The writing in these papers is clear, concise, and well organized. The paper demonstrates that the writer has thought carefully about the topic and clearly understands the issues pertaining to it. The paper is not a simply regurgitation of information; instead it offers analysis, synthesis, and an in-depth, scholarly and interesting perspective on the topic, including the writer’s observations and conclusions.

**“B” (Competent)** – “B” papers are generally well done and professional in appearance. These papers have minimal types and generally use correct grammar, sentence structure and spelling. The writing in these papers is generally clear, concise and well-organized; the progression of the paper, referencing of sources, and exploration of issues may not be as clearly present and comprehensive as in excellent papers. The paper demonstrates that the writer has thought carefully about the topic and generally understands the issues pertaining to it. The paper is not a simple regurgitation of information; it offers analysis and synthesis, but an in-depth, scholarly and interesting perspective on the topic is less well developed than in an excellent paper. The writer’s observations and conclusions are present but less well linked to the material presented.

**“C” (Emerging)** – “C” papers are generally professional in appearance but may have problems such as formatting errors, types or problems with grammar, sentence structure and spelling. The writing needs additional work in the areas of clarity, conciseness and organization. Problems may be present in the appropriate use of references. Although the topic is generally covered, the paper lacks a depth and understanding of related issues. The analysis and synthesis of information is limited. The writer’s observations and conclusions seem to be opinions and not supported by the paper.

**“D” (Limited)** – “D” papers typically reflect minimal effort in preparing the paper. There may be numerous formatting errors, typos, and problems with grammar, sentence structure and spelling. Significant problems with clarity, conciseness, and organization of information are present. Significant problems in referencing information are often present. The topic is minimally covered; analysis and synthesis of the information or the exploration of related issues are missing or weakly stated. The writer’s observations and conclusions may be missing or seem unconnected to the paper.

**“F” (Failing)** – A grade of “F” is warranted when students do not complete the paper, when preparation for the paper has clearly been minimal, when the paper is disorganized, unclear, lacking in basic coverage of the topic, or when the appearance of the paper makes it difficult to interpret the writer’s intent. A failing grade will also be given if the writing in the paper is significantly below appropriate college standards regarding such things as basic grammar, sentence structure, and spelling.

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**SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM GRADING SCALE & CALCULATION OF FINAL GRADE**

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A (93-100)	A- (90-92)	A--- Work is <u>exceptional</u> with regard to all criteria
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B---Work is <u>very good</u> with regard to all criteria
B- (80-82)	C+ (77-79)	C---Work is <u>sufficient</u> with regard to all criteria
C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	D---Work is <u>inadequate</u> with regard to most or all criteria

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D+ (67-69)                      D (63-66)                      F---Work is inadequate with regard to all criteria  
D- (60-62)                      F (below 60)

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Ritter, J. A. (2013). *Social work policy practice: Changing our community, our nation, and the world*. Boston: Pearson.

Downey, K. (2010). *The woman behind the New Deal*. New York: Anchor Books.

Other readings as assigned. A number of Op-eds and articles from newspapers such as the *New York Times* will be assigned throughout the semester.

**SUGGESTED READINGS & WEBSITES**

Since this is a policy course, students are encouraged to read the political section of the *New York Times* and/or the *Washington Post* and to watch political programming on television such as Last Week Tonight with Jon Oliver and *Meet the Press*.

National Association of Social Workers. (2015). *Social work speaks (10th edition). NASW Policy Statements*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Congressional Social Work Caucus: <http://socialworkcaucus-lee.house.gov/>

Congressional Research Institute for Social Work & Policy: <http://crispinc.org/>

NASW Pace----Building political power for social workers: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pace/default.asp>

Social Welfare Action Alliance: <http://www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org/>

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE**

Assignment	Week Due	Points
Policy Analysis Brief 1	7	20
Policy Analysis Brief 2	11	20
Testimony at Mock Committee Hearing	14	20
One page fact sheet	14	20
Book Report	Dec 14, 3pm	50
Attendance/Class Participation	N/A	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>

<p><b>Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.</b></p>
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ALL assignments should be of your highest quality, both in form and content. Please type, double space. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date listed. Assignments will NOT be accepted after class has begun on the due date.

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**WEEKLY OUTLINE**

<b>Week #1: Sept 1 &amp; 3</b>	<b>POLICY PRACTICE: THE HIDDEN SIDE OF SOCIAL WORK</b>
<p>Overview of course Review syllabus</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Reading:</u></b> Chapter 1 Ritter book</p>	
<b>Week #2: September 8 &amp; 10</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORKERS AND POLITICAL ACTION: THREE RELEVANT HISTORICAL PERIODS</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 2 Ritter book</p>	<p><b>Public Lecture by Philosopher Peter Singer</b> "The Most Good You Can Do: Effectively Aiding Humans and Other Humans." <b>Thursday, September 10</b> 7:00 - 8:30 PM Stoller Center</p>
<b>Week #3: September 15 &amp; 17</b>	<b>THE ROLE OF VALUES IN THE POLITICAL ARENA</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 3 Ritter book</p>	
<b>Week #4: September 22 &amp; 24</b>	<b>SOCIAL WORKERS IN ACTION: THE SIX STAGES OF THE POLICY CHANGE PROCESS</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 4 Ritter book</p>	
<b>Week #5: Sept 29 &amp; Oct 1</b>	<b>WHEN WEARING BUTTONS ISN'T ENOUGH</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 5 Ritter</p>	
<b>Week #6: October 6 &amp; 8</b>	<b>HEALTHCARE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 6 Ritter book</p>	<p><b><u>Film:</u></b> Sicko or Obama's Deal</p>
<b>Week #7: October 13 &amp; 15</b>	<b>MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b> Chapter 7 Ritter book</p>	<p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b> Policy Brief 1</p>
<b>Week #8: October 20 &amp; 22</b>	<b>FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Required Readings:</u></b></p>	

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Chapter 8 Ritter book		
<b>Week #9:</b>	<b>October 27 &amp; 29</b>	<b>CHILD WELFARE &amp; CHILDREN'S RIGHTS</b>
<u>Required Readings:</u> Chapter 9 Ritter book		
<b>Week #10:</b>	<b>November 3 &amp; 5</b>	<b>AGING POLICY &amp; THE CONTROVERSY OVER END-OF-LIFE POLICIES</b>
<u>Required Readings:</u> Chapter 10 Ritter book		<u>Film:</u> How to Die in Oregon
<b>Week #11:</b>	<b>November 10 &amp; 12</b>	<b>USING THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM TO EFFECT CHANGE</b>
<u>Required Readings:</u> Chapter 11 Ritter book		<u>Assignments Due:</u> Policy Brief 2
<b>Week #12:</b>	<b>November 17 &amp; 19</b>	<b>THE POLITICS OF ECONOMICS</b>
<u>Required Readings:</u> Chapter 12 Ritter book		
<b>Week #13:</b>	<b>November 24</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Week! Have a wonderful break!</b>
<u>Required Readings:</u> TBA		
<b>Week #14:</b>	<b>December 1 &amp; 3</b>	<b>Mock committee hearing in class this week</b>
		<u>Assignments Due:</u> One-page written testimony and one-page fact sheet
<b>Week #15:</b>	<b>December 8</b>	<b>A LOOK TO THE FUTURE</b>
Chapter 13, Ritter book Course wrap-up Course evaluations		
<b>Final Exam: Book Review due Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> by 3pm</b>		

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**ASSIGNMENTS**

**POLICY ANALYSIS BRIEFS (2)**

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This project involves selecting a social welfare policy bill introduced in a **recent** session of the Oregon state legislature or the U.S. Congress. It may have been recently passed into law or it may still be under consideration. Students are advised to meet with the Instructor to discuss selected topic to make sure it is an appropriate one for this course.

**Selecting your policy:** The **first step** is to think about a general topic of interest. **Next**, you will need to find a specific piece of legislation that addresses this issue. A number of options are provided below, however, students are not limited to these topics. You can get ideas by visiting the websites of various advocacy organizations and by searching for bills that have been introduced in the Oregon state legislature or the United States Congress on these respective websites. For bills introduced in the U.S. Congress, please visit: [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) For bills introduced in the state of Oregon, visit: <https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/>

Select a piece of legislation that meets the following criteria:

- It is popular enough that you can find sufficient information and coverage by the media
- There are people on both sides of the issue
- Controversial policies tend to work best for this assignment
- The actual bill is not too lengthy (some are 1,000 pages long!)

Topic	Legislation
<b>Economic Fairness/Equality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act (FAMILY ACT) (paid family leave)</li> <li>• Healthy Families Act (paid sick leave)</li> <li>• Oregon legislation (2015) to provide free community college</li> <li>• Pay Workers a Living Wage Act</li> <li>• Schedules that Work Act (Senator Warren)</li> </ul>
<b>Voting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation that is attempting to restore the historic Voting Rights Act (addressing barriers to people voting) (Voting Rights Advancement Act; Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2015)</li> </ul>
<b>Immigration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigration reform policies focused on undocumented youth and/or families</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REDEEM Act (to reform criminal justice system) (Cory Booker and Rand Paul)</li> <li>• Mercy Act (bans solitary confinement of juveniles)</li> <li>• Gun control legislation</li> <li>• End Racial Profiling Act</li> <li>• Policies to reduce police brutality</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ban the Box legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Healthcare/Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect Women’s Health from Corporate Interference Act</li> <li>• The <i>Communities United with Religious Leaders for the Elimination of HIV/AIDS (CURE) Act of 2013</i></li> <li>• Expanded and Improved Medicare for All or The American Health Security Act (making health care a universal human right)</li> <li>• Mental Health First Act of 2015</li> </ul>
<b>Social Work Profession</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Work Reinvestment Act</li> </ul>
<b>Gender and/or sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Equality Act (LGBT)</li> <li>• Paycheck Fairness Act</li> <li>• Legislation focused on those who are transgender (such as GENDA bill in New York State)</li> <li>• Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s bill to reform sexual assault procedures in the military</li> <li>• Senator Kirsten Gillibrand’s bill to address sexual assault on college campuses</li> </ul>
<b>Child Welfare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak up to Protect Every Abused Kid Act</li> <li>• Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Act</li> <li>• UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> <li>• Mental Health in Schools Act</li> <li>• Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2015</li> </ul>
<b>Older Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older Americans Reauthorization Act of 2014</li> <li>• "<i>Health Outcomes, Planning, and Education (HOPE) for Alzheimer's Act</i></li> </ul>

Students will write two policy analysis briefs that will help them analyze the policy in sufficient depth. The goal is to prepare a balanced and objective analysis to educate others about the issue. No matter how strongly you feel about this piece of legislation, you are presenting an objective analysis to help others make decisions. You will be able to provide your own opinion and recommendations in later assignments (fact sheet and oral testimony).

Each policy brief should include a number of references drawn from a mix of the following: scholarly references, government documents, materials from coalitions or advocacy organizations, websites from respected national and/or advocacy organizations, policy think tanks (both conservative and liberal), popular press (newspapers such as the NY Times and Washington Post, magazines such as Time and Newsweek), and personal interviews (with elected officials, legislative aides, human service providers, advocacy groups, etc.). It is important to gain as comprehensive

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an understanding of the issue as possible----make sure that you use sources that can speak to **all** sides of the debate. Wikipedia, or similar sources, should **NOT** be used as a major source in this paper.

**Note:** The variety and number of references consulted/cited in the policy briefs will be a factor in the grading of this assignment.

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**Policy Analysis Brief #1:**

**Part I: Description of the problem that necessitated the introduction of this legislation**

Describe the social problem being addressed by this legislation. Make sure to address the following in your policy analysis brief:

**Suggested Headings**

- **Introduction** (1 paragraph)
- **Social Problem being addressed by SB 100/HR 200** (provide data and statistics to describe the problem and its prevalence)
- **Those affected by the social problem** (provide data and statistics to describe who is affected by this social problem and who this legislation will be targeting, including any vulnerable populations)
- **Causes of the social problem** (according to experts and researchers; need to cite research studies and/or expert advocacy groups)
- **Why advocates believe that this bill would solve the problem** (what is their theory of change? if this bill is passed, how could advocates evaluate it to determine whether it has been effective? what data would they collect to evaluate the effectiveness of this legislation?)

**Part II: Description of Legislation** Provide the reader with a nice overview of this piece of legislation. Introduce your audience to the bill stating its importance for social welfare policy in Oregon or the nation.

**Suggested Headings**

- **Overview of SB 100/HR 200** (major components of this legislation; what does it do exactly? It is controversial? If passed, will this bill cost anything? In other words, does it have a fiscal impact?)
- **Sponsors & Current Status of SB 100/HR 200** (include primary sponsors and number of co-sponsors for both bills; what political parties are the sponsors and co-sponsors from? Does this bill have bi-partisan support?)
- **Short term and long term goals of SB 100/HR 200**
- **Who will be charged with implementation?** (if this bill is passed into law, who will be impacted in terms of implementation?)
- **American Social Values that support this legislation** (see Ritter text, p. 38; does this bill support social work values---only applies to social work majors)
- **Historical Precedence for this type of policy** (has this policy been attempted in the past or is this the first time it has been introduced? Have other states or other countries passed this type of legislation? Other ways

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we have tried to address this social problem via legislation or social programs? Summarize other major legislation that has been passed into law that relates to this current bill.)

- **Conclusion** (1 paragraph)

**Note:** Keep in mind that your audience consists of those who do not know anything about this policy and want to be informed about it (e.g., a legislator who will decide how to vote on this, members of the public). You want to make it very easy for them. Do not use first person.

**Note:** Please print out and attach a copy of the bill to your paper.

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### **Policy Analysis Brief #2: Current social & political context of this legislation**

Examine the political environment in Oregon or the United States as regards to this policy. Make sure to address the following in your policy analysis brief:

#### **Suggested Headings**

- **Supporters of SB 100/HR 200 & their Arguments** (legislators; prominent individuals; advocacy groups; special interests; organizations) (use quotes for arguments, when possible)
- **Opponents of SB 100/HR 200 & their Arguments** (legislators; prominent individuals; advocacy groups; special interests; organizations) (use quotes for arguments, when possible)
- **Power & Resources** (describe each side in terms of their relative power, resources, and influence)
- **NASW position on this issue** (if applicable) (required for SW majors)
- **Political ideology informing this policy** (progressive; conservative) (is there an ideological or values debate?)
- **Media Coverage of SB 100/HR 200** (Has this legislation been discussed on any of the political shows or news programs on television or radio, in the newspaper, or on various news or political websites (New York Times, Washington Post, FOX News, NPR, This Week on ABC, Meet the Press, CNN, MSNBC, Daily Kos, AlterNet, Common Dreams, Huffington Post, etc.)? Provide some examples of this coverage and some quotes. Was the coverage negative, positive, or neutral? Do a Google search!
- **Strategies/tactics used by advocates** (to get the bill passed) (see Tactics box, p. 246)
- **Strategies/tactics used by opponents** (to defeat the bill) (see Tactics box, p. 246)
- **Public Opinion** (on this bill or on the issue more generally) (find a public opinion poll, if possible)

#### **Grading Criteria for Policy Briefs:**

Papers will be graded on the following criteria: depth of critical analysis, completeness and thoroughness, organization and clarity, appropriate number of references and the quality of those references, originality and creativity, ability to cover **both** sides of the debate, formatting/layout of the paper, and the quality of the writing. Each policy brief should be 7-10 pages long.

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Each student will write a 1-page written testimony and will then give oral testimony at a mock committee hearing that will be held during class. More instructions about this assignment will be given in class.

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**ONE-PAGE FACT SHEET**

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Each student will develop a one-page fact sheet about their policy. Fact sheets are given to legislators and other stakeholders to educate them on a piece of legislation and to advocate a position. Students will be provided with examples of fact sheets.

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**BOOK REVIEW PAPER**

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During the course of the semester, students will read "Our Kids" by Robert Putnam. At the end of the semester, students will submit a critical examination of this book by responding to the following:

- Introduce the reader to this book keeping in mind that they have not read the book. Provide a nice summary/overview of the book.
- What is the author's aim for writing this book? What audience is he writing for? In your opinion, what audiences would most benefit from reading this book?
- Describe the main points and major themes of this book. What most stood out to you regarding the biggest challenges facing children and youth today and the impact of barriers regarding social class? What stories and/or data made the biggest impact on you as you read this book? Be as specific as possible and cite the book.
- Be critical of the book. What are the strengths of this book? What could have been improved? Do you agree with the author's premise that social class is more of a barrier for children today than race/ethnicity is?
- Based on your experience reading this book, the textbook, and class lectures, what have you learned about U.S. programs and policies that have been established to support the well-being of children and youth? Are they sufficient, in your opinion? Why or why not?
- After reading this book, what kinds of social policies would you recommend to help ensure that children and youth have access to equal opportunity in this country and to help them have a viable future?

During the course of the semester, students will read "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson. At the end of the semester, students will submit a critical examination of this book by responding to the following:

- Introduce the reader to this book keeping in mind that they have not read the book. Provide a nice summary/overview of the book.
- What is the author's aim for writing this book? What audience is he writing for? In your opinion, what audiences would most benefit from reading this book?
- Describe the main points and major themes of this book. What most stood out to you regarding the biggest problems and inequities in the U.S. criminal justice system? Do you agree with the author's premise that the criminal justice system has serious problems with institutional discrimination against racial minorities and those living in poverty?
- What stories and/or data made the biggest impact on you as you read this book? Be as specific as possible and cite the book. Be critical of the book. What are the strengths of this book? What could have been improved?

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- After reading this book, what kinds of policies would you recommend to help ensure that the criminal justice system works more fairly? Be as specific as possible.

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**CLASS PARTICIPATION**

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Since there are no exams for this class, students will be graded on whether they read the readings for each week and participated in the class discussions. Students will be called on during class meetings.