

**The University of North Texas
College of Health and Public Service
Department of Social Work**

**SOWK 2430 (Section 001)
Policies, Issues, and Programs in Social Welfare (3 credit hours)
Classroom: Language Building, Room 316
Meeting Time: Thursdays, 2:00–5:00 p.m.
Spring 2026**

Instructor Contact Information

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Pronouns: he/him/his

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Communication Expectations: Connect with me through university email and/or by attending office hours. My email inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives that students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates may occur, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please set up a meeting with me to discuss your concerns.

Course Description

This course examines how policies are developed, and explores current and historical social welfare policies and legislative efforts that influence societal problems. It explores the relationships between basic societal ideological values and social welfare policy. Policy implications from multiple areas such as poverty and health will be investigated. The experiences of diverse and vulnerable populations most impacted by these initiatives and how policies impact social and economic justice will also be explored. This course encourages students to think critically about the role of politics and policy in the delivery network. Students will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to analyze policy and advocate for the needs of diverse populations. Through this course, students will understand the importance of social welfare policy in the social work profession and its impact on all levels of practice.

Competencies & Practice Behaviors

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) approved updated Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for accredited programs in 2022. This course emphasizes social work competencies

and practice behaviors as indicated in the following table:

Core Competency	Course Objectives (Practice Behaviors)	Assessment
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	1. Students will make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context.	Policy Activities; Reflection Paper; Policy Analysis Papers
Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice	2. Students will advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels.	Policy Activities; Policy Analysis Papers
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	3. Students will use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services. 4. Students will apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.	Policy Analysis Papers; Quizzes; Policy Activities

Course Structure & Success

This is a face-to-face course that encompasses lectures; in-class activities, discussions, and assignments; individual and small group work; analysis of a social welfare policy; and online quizzes. To succeed in this course, you must attend class, complete readings and assignments on time, and engage with the course content as we move through the semester. Additionally, this course relies on the UNT learning management system (i.e., Canvas) for multiple course functions. In this course, Canvas is used for communication purposes, providing course documents and resources, submitting and returning assignments, online quizzes, and tracking grades. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the content of the course Canvas site.

Academic Success Resources

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Course Prerequisites or Other Restrictions

None

Required/Recommended Materials

Required Textbook:

Karger, H., & Stoesz, D. (2022). *American social welfare policy: A pluralist approach* (9th Edition). Pearson Education.

Additional Required Readings:

Other “readings” (e.g., podcasts, websites, videos) will be included in Canvas.

Recommended Resources to Support Your Writing:

American Psychological Association. (2025). *APA style*. <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Resources & style guides for framing health equity & avoiding stigmatizing language*. https://www.cdc.gov/health-communication/php/toolkit/resources-style-guides.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/Resources.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *General format*.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Technology Requirements

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and UNT Library resources (e.g., database searching), as well as access to and skills related to the use of Microsoft Word. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. At UNT we have an Information Technology Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UNT Help Desk (<https://aits.unt.edu/support/>)

Check online for available support hours.

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

Chat: <https://aits.unt.edu/support/chat.html>

Walk-in: Sage Hall, Room 130

Course Assignments

Assignment	Points Possible	Percentage of Final Grade
Policy Activities (2 at 50 points each; 2 at 150 points each)	400	40%
Social Welfare Policy Analysis (2 papers at 150 points each)	300	30%
Quizzes (1 at 50 points; 2 at 80 points each)	210	21%
Reflection Paper: Personal Values and Political Ideology	80	8%
Social Welfare Policy Interest Form	10	1%
Total	1000	100%

Brief Assignment Descriptions (Full assignment descriptions are provided in Canvas; due dates are provided in the “Course Outline” at the end of this syllabus and in Canvas):

Policy Activities

- Four (4) social welfare policy-related activity assignments.
- Activities are group-based and include a policy discussion, the creation/presentation of a U.S. social welfare policy timeline, and the creation/presentation of a social policy advocacy poster (draft and final versions).
- See assignment overviews and applicable grading rubrics (in Canvas) for detailed information.

Social Welfare Policy Analysis Papers

- Two (2) papers comprise the Social Welfare Policy Analysis assignment; each part is focused on your selected social welfare policy.
- See assignment overview and grading rubric (in Canvas) for detailed information.

Quizzes

- Three (3) Canvas-based quizzes that review the main social welfare policy content from course readings and lectures.
- Completed individually; open book/open note; untimed.

Reflection Paper: Personal Values and Political Ideology

- A brief reflection paper focused on your personal values and political ideology.
- See assignment overview and grading rubric (in Canvas) for detailed information.

Social Welfare Policy Interest Form

- In preparation for the Social Welfare Policy Analysis Papers, each student will submit their policy topic for professor approval.

Grading

Final course grades will be assigned on the basis of the following point system:

A = 900–1000 points

B = 800–899 points

C = 700–799 points

D = 600–699 points

F = < 600 points

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system at UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. Your feedback is important to me, as I work to continually improve my teaching. The SPOT survey will be made available to you near the end of the semester.

Course Policies

Attendance

As a student enrolled in this course, you are responsible for regular and punctual attendance and are expected to participate in course activities. Attendance is taken in this course and it is your responsibility to make sure that you are counted as present when you attend class. If you are more than fifteen minutes late, or leave more than fifteen minutes early, you will be counted as absent for the day unless approved by the professor.

Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. You should attend every class meeting unless you have a “University excused absence” in accordance with [UNT Policy 06.039 Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#). According to this UNT policy, absences excused by the University are (see policy for additional details):

- a. religious holy days;
- b. participation in official university functions;
- c. required military service;
- d. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and
- e. when the University is officially closed.

If you are requesting an excused absence for one of the above reasons, you are responsible for requesting this in writing to your professor within 10 business days of the absence, and for providing satisfactory evidence to substantiate an excused absence.

However, it is understood that illness, emergencies, and unexpected events may arise. Therefore, **each student is allowed up to two absences during the semester without penalty**. These two absences can be used at your discretion and do not require the submission of documentation.

Any additional absence beyond the two allowed will negatively impact your grade unless the absence is due to documented, exceptional circumstances; is discussed with your professor in a timely manner

(within 10 business days of the absence); and is approved as an excused absence by your professor. Each unexcused absence beyond the two allowed will result in a 25-point deduction from your total points earned in the class.

If you know you are going to miss a class or are going to be significantly late, contact your professor via e-mail in advance to alert them of your situation. “In advance” means before the class period starts, not during class or after the class is over. Using a classmate to inform the professor that you will not be in class is not appropriate or sufficient.

If you must miss class, you are responsible for staying up to date on class materials, announcements, and assignments by reviewing the course syllabus and Canvas.

Assignment & Examination Policy

All coursework is due by the date and time described in the “Course Outline” provided at the end of this syllabus and in Canvas. Late assignments will not be accepted unless arrangements prior to the due date/time were made between the student and the professor.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the professor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the professor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940-565-2324 and obtain a ticket number. The professor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

All quizzes are open book/open note (unless otherwise specified) and must be completed independently.

Turnitin software (i.e., Turnitin plagiarism review, AI writing detection) will be used to assure academic integrity for assignment submissions.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this Course. Students shall not use “AI tools” (collectively referring to AI text generators and other AI-based assistive resources, such as ChatGPT) to assist in completion of course assignments, including quizzes.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable

accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at 940-565-4323.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>) to learn more.

Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect: [Eagle Connect \(https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect\)](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14, and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website \(http://spot.unt.edu/\)](http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

If you are a survivor of relational or sexual violence, there is support for you. There are on- and off-campus resources available to survivors at no cost. Counseling and Testing Services can provide confidential mental health counseling. They are in Chestnut Hall 311. You may also call 940-565-2741 to schedule an appointment. Denton County Friends of the Family is a community agency that offers free counseling and 24/7 crisis hotline services to survivors. Contact them at 940-387-5131. The UNT Survivor advocate can assist in reporting options, arrange for academic and housing accommodations, schedule appointments and help connect students to UNT and other community resources; they are located in University Union 409 and can be contacted at 940-565-2648. To report sexual misconduct to Equal Opportunity & Title IX, visit report.unt.edu. The UNT Police Department can be contacted at 940-565-3000.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g., software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- Counseling and Testing Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT eUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (e.g., she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- Financial Aid & Scholarships (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- Student Legal Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- Career Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- Center for Belonging & Engagement (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/center-for-belonging-and-engagement>)

- UNT Food Pantry (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/desresources/programs/food-pantry/index.html>)

Academic Support Services

- Online Student Resources (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- Academic Success Center (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- UNT Libraries (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- UNT Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- Math Lab (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)

COURSE OUTLINE, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

*It is expected that readings will be done **prior** to class meetings.
The professor reserves the right to modify the schedule, as course needs dictate.*

Class	Course Topics	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 Jan 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General introductions & discussion • Course introduction & syllabus review 		
Week 2 Jan 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Activity 1 • Social Policy and the American Welfare State 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Activity 1; Due Thursday, January 22 (in class)
Week 3 Jan 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest speaker: Professor Amanda Manchack (BSW Application Presentation) • The Origins of American Social Welfare • Policy Activity 2 (Group meeting time and professor consultations) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflection Paper: Personal Values and Political Ideology; Due Sunday, February 1 (11:59 p.m.)
Week 4 Feb 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Origins of American Social Welfare • Policy Activity 2 (Group meeting time and professor consultations) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit social welfare policy interest form to your professor; Due Sunday, February 8 (11:59 p.m.)
Week 5 Feb 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Activity 2: Group Timeline Presentations • Discussion: Social welfare pioneers 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Activity 2; Due Thursday, February 12 (in class)
Week 6 Feb 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Welfare Policy Research • Article searching (For Social Welfare Policy Analysis Papers) • Policy Activity 3 (Assignment discussion; group meeting time) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 3	

Class	Course Topics	Readings	Assignments
Week 7 Feb 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination and Stigma in American Society • Policy Activity 3 (Group meeting time and professor consultations) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 1; Due Sunday, March 1 (11:59 p.m.)
Week 8 Mar 5 (Semester Midpoint Mar 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination and Stigma in American Society • Policy Activity 3 (Group meeting time and professor consultations) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Welfare Policy Analysis Paper (part 1); Due Sunday, March 8 (11:59 p.m.)
Spring Break – No Class (March 9–15)			
Week 9 Mar 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty in America • Policy Activity 3 (Review drafts with individual groups) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Activity 3 (draft version); Due Thursday, March 19 (in class)
Week 10 Mar 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty in America • Policy Activity 3 (Group meeting time) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 5	
Week 11 Apr 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Voluntary Sector Today • Privatization and Human Services Corporations • Policy Activity 3 (Group meeting time) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 7	
Week 12 Apr 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Activity 3 Presentations • The Making of Governmental Policy 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Activity 3 (final version); Due Thursday, April 9 (in class)
Week 13 Apr 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Policy and Income Distribution • Social Insurance Programs 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 2; Due Sunday, April 19 (11:59 p.m.)
Week 14 Apr 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Assistance Programs • The American Health Care System 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 12	

Class	Course Topics	Readings	Assignments
Week 15 Apr 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Policy • Course wrap-up 	<input type="checkbox"/> Karger & Stoesz, Ch. 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Welfare Policy Analysis Paper (part 2); Due Thursday, April 30 (11:59 p.m.)
Final Exam Week May 4–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No in-person class meeting 		<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 3; Due Thursday, May 7 (11:59 p.m.)