

# SW 701: Social Policy: Critical Frameworks

* **Wednesdays January 12 to April 6, 2022, 11:30-2:30**
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# Course Overview

## Course Description:

In modern welfare states social policy is integral to the mechanism and process of pursuing equity and social justice for individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. Situating social policy in the contexts of history, politics, and ongoing globalization processes, this course explores key concepts, issues, and theories concerning social welfare and social policy making in and beyond Canada; the intersection of welfare restructuring and changing socio-economic conditions; and the connections between social policy and social work practices. Identifying the uneven policy effects on different social groups, it seeks a critical understanding of the issues of poverty, inequity, and social exclusion from a social policy perspective. In discussing the challenges and possibilities regarding the future of social welfare, the roles of various actors of policy making, including the state, citizens, and civil society, as well as social workers, in pursuing social justice and human rights in both the local and global contexts are also discussed.

## Course Objectives

1. To understand the dynamics of social policy making and various perspectives underpinning the policy making process
2. To examine social policy issues arising out of globalization and restructuring through the lens of policy arenas such as income, housing and child welfare.
3. To identify the uneven policy effects on marginalized groups (as exacerbated by Covid-19) and seek a critical understanding of the issues of poverty, inequity, oppression, and social exclusion from a social policy perspective
4. To appreciate the connections among social issues, social policy, policy effects and social work practices
5. To explore the strategies of social policy responses in changing contexts

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

## Course Format

Information will be presented through lectures, presentations and discussion.

Two thirds of the class will be in-person and one third will be virtual via Zoom.

## Required Texts:

1. Online readings available through the McMaster University Library Database and via A2L.
2. Additional readings are provided online via Avenue to Learn.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. Participation (10%)

Students’ attendance and participation are essential for this course. Students are expected to come to class on time, complete the required readings, and take an active part in the discussion.

1. **Policy Brief** (35%) due February 16 and **Presentation** (10%) March 9

* Students will work in groups of 2-3 to compile a concise policy brief which highlights a current existing social policy issue that has been exacerbated by Covid-19 or a new social policy issue created by Covid-19. The policy brief will include background on the issue, evidence of the pressing nature of the issue, information about inequities that need addressing, and recommendations for policy responses. The policy brief will be 4-6 pages in length including graphs, tables, and references.
* Each group will also give a short presentation on their policy brief in class including a 4-6 slide Powerpoint Presentation summarizing the main points of the brief and an indication of appropriate recipients of the brief and recommended advocacy efforts.
* A more detailed description of this assignment will be available on Avenue to Learn.

1. **Final Paper**: Policy Analysis - Thesis or Project Topic (45%) Due April 13
   * Students will:
     1. complete a scholarly paper presenting an analysis of a policy[ies] relevant to your MSW CA thesis topic or MSW CL placement project
     2. include a minimum of 8 scholarly sources in their paper
     3. use a minimum of 2 scholarly articles/chapters (more if relevant) from the course to support their analysis
     4. undertake library research to access necessary policy materials and policy analysis related publications.
     5. You may include popular materials (e.g. newspaper article, magazine article, podcast) to further support your work.
   * **Length**: 14-15 pages (approximately 4000-5000 words in APA format)
   * **Additional details are available online via Avenue to Learn.**

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual with particular attention paid to font size (Times-Roman 12), spacing (double spaced) and margins (minimum of 1 inch at the top, bottom, left and right of each page) as papers not meeting these requirements will not be accepted for grading.
* Students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments. When submitting, please keep a spare copy of your assignments.

## Avenue to Learn or Courses with an On-line Element (Zoom)

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss with the course instructor.

## Submitting Assignments & Grading

Assignments must be submitted electronically via Avenue to Learning by 11:59pm on the required due date. A 2% reduction will be applied each day (i.e., Monday - Sunday) after the due date. Students should consult the McMaster University policy on extensions if they wish to request an extension on an assignment. All extensions must be negotiated prior to the assignment due date. Please use the following criteria when preparing your assignment:

1. Include a title page with all relevant course information, adhere to the page limits specified, be formatted with 12 pt. font and standard margins, and be stapled;
2. The citations and references in all assignments (if applicable) must use APA format (5th or 6th edition): more information is available through the e-Resources link on the library home page <http://library.mcmaster.ca> and at <http://www.apastyle.org>.

## Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last five digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Student Responsibilities

* Students are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students should read material in preparation for class, attend class on time and remain for the full duration of the class. A formal break will be provided in the middle of each class, students are to return from the break on time.
* In the past, student and faculty have found that non-course related use of laptop computers and hand-held electronic devices during class to be distracting and at times disruptive. Consequently, during class, students are expected to only use such devices for taking notes and other activities directly related to the lecture or class activity taking place.
* Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices in the classroom.

## Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

## Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom, and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office ***normally within 10 working days*** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

*This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.*

## Week 1: January 12, 2022 Virtual, Synchronous

### Topics:

* **Introduction**

## Week 2: January 19, 2022 Virtual, Synchronous

### Topics:

* **Framing Social Policy**

### Readings:

* Bradshaw, T.K. (2007). Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development. *Community Development 38*(1), 7-25.
* Schon, D. & Rein, M. (1994). *Frame Reflection: Toward the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 2.
* Peter, N. & Polgar, J.M. (2021) Social Assistance in Ontario:What is the Problem Represented to Be?*Journal of Poverty 25*(3), 229-248. DOI:10.1080/10875549.2020.1799285

## Week 3: January 26, 2022 Virtual, Synchronous

### Topics:Policy briefs as an advocacy tool

Readings:

* Ffrench-Constant, L. How to plan, write and communicate an effective policy brief: Three steps to success. Research to Action.
* Policy Briefs.University of Chapel Hill Writing Center.
* Writing Effective Reports 4.1, Preparing policy briefs, pp. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <https://www.fao.org/3/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf>
* See IRDC’s detailed website on writing policy briefs: <https://www.idrc.ca/en/how-write-policy-brief>

### After an introduction to policy briefs and the assignment, students will work in small groups to begin on the policy brief assignment

## Week 4: February 2, 2022 Virtual, Synchronous

Topics: **The study of social policy: as discourse, as redistribution, as policy process**

### Readings:

* De Corte, J. & Roose, R. (2020). Social work as a policy actor: understanding social policy as an open-ended democratic practice. *European Journal of Social Work 23*(2), 227-238.
* Smith-Carrier, T. & Lawlor, A. (2017). Realising our (neoliberal) potential? A critical discourse analysis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Ontario, Canada. *Critical Social Policy 37*(1), 105–127.
* Sefton, T. (2006). “Distributive and Redistributive Policy”. In M. Moran, M. Rein & R. Goodin, (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* Pp. 607-623. Oxford University Press.

## Week 5: February 9, 2022

### Topics: Social Policy, Covid-19 and Employment

### Readings:

* Canadian Women’s Foundation, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ontario Nonprofit Network, and Fay Faraday (2020). *Resetting Normal: Women, Decent Work and Canada’s Fractured Care Economy*.
* Stanford, J. (2020). *Ten Ways the Covid-19 Pandemic Must Change Work for Good.* Vancouver: Centre for Future Work.
* Migrant Rights Network. (2021). *Underinsured: Ending the Exclusion of Migrants from EI.* *<https://migrantworkersalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MRN-Submissions-to-HUMA-on-EI.pdf>*

## Week 6: February 16, 2022 Virtual

### Topics: Housing and Homelessness

### Readings:

* Hulchanski, J. D., Campsie, P., Chau, S. Hwang, S., Paradis, E. What’s in a Word? In: Hulchanski, J. David; Campsie, Philippa; Chau, Shirley; Hwang, Stephen; Paradis, Emily (eds.) *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada* (e-book), Introduction. Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto. [www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome](http://www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome)
* Johnstone, M., Lee, E., & Conolly, J. (2017). Understanding the meta-discourse driving homeless policies and programs in Toronto, Canada: The neoliberal management of social service delivery. *International Social Work 60*(6), 1443-1456.
* Schwan, K., & Ali, N. (2021). *A Rights-Based, GBA+ Analysis of the National Housing Strategy*. Toronto, ON: Women’s National Housing & Homelessness Network.

**February 23 NO CLASS – Winter Break**

## Week 7: March 2, 2022

### Topics: Income security, inequality and poverty

### Readings:

* Gazco, A., Baker Collins, S., Smith-Carrier, T. & Wilson, C. (2019). The Generationing of Social Assistance Receipt and "Welfare Dependency" in Ontario, Canada, *Social Problems.* Online Publication: doi: 10.1093/socpro/spz032
* Block, S., Galabuzi, G., & Tranjan, R. (2011). Canada’s Colour-Coded Income Inequality. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
* McDonald, D. (2019). *Unaccommodating: Rental Housing Wage in Canada.* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

## Week 8: March 9, 2022

### Topics: Policy Brief Presentations and discussion

## Week 9: March 16, 2022 Virtual

Topic: Child welfare, child care and Indigenous equity issues

Readings:

* Blackstock, C. (2016). The Complainant: the Canadian Human Rights Commission Case on First Nations Child Welfare. *McGill Law Journal 62*(2), 287-328.
* Prentice, S. & White, L. (2019). Childcare deserts and distributional disadvantages: thelegacies of split childcare policies and programmes in Canada. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy 35*(1), 59-74.
* Patel, R. Justin Trudeau’s Liberals start the clock on a deal to compensate First Nations children and their families. November 4, 2021. *Toronto Star*

<https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2021/11/04/justin-trudeaus-liberals-start-the-clock-on-a-deal-to-compensate-first-nations-children-and-their-families.html?rf>

## Week 10: March 23, 2022

Topics: **Intersectionality through the lens of health**

### Readings:

* Hankivsky, O., et al. (2015). An intersectionality-based policy analysis framework: critical reflections on a methodology for advancing equity. *International Journal for Equity in Health 13*, 1-19.
* Raphael, D. (2011). A discourse analysis of the social determinants of health. *Critical Public Health 21*(2), 221-236.
* Spiegel, J.M., Breilh, J., & Yassi, A. Why language matters: insights and challenges in applying a social determination of health approach in a North-South collaborative research program. *Globalization and Health 11*(9), 1-17.

## Week 11: March 30, 2022

### Topics: **Where policy meets practice**

### Readings:

* Baker Collins, S. (2016). The space in the rules: Bureaucratic discretion in the administration of Ontario Works*. Social Policy and Society 15*(2), 221-235.
* Cronley, C. (2020): Invisible intersectionality in measuring vulnerability among individuals experiencing homelessness – critically appraising the VI-SPDAT, *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, DOI: 10.1080/10530789.2020.1852502
* Tomkinson, S. (2020). Three understandings of administrative work: discretion, agency and practice. *Canadian Public Administration 63*(4), 675-680.

## Week 12: April 6, 2022 Virtual

### Topics: **Advocacy and the policy process**

### Readings:

* CUPA brief on Women’s Complex Homelessness
* Migrant Students Alliance for Change: *Data from Post-Graduate Work Permit Holders in Canada* [*https://migrantworkersalliance.org/policy/msu2020pgwpfactsheet/*](https://migrantworkersalliance.org/policy/msu2020pgwpfactsheet/)
* Blog on policy victory, “We stopped mass deportations”: <https://migrantworkersalliance.org/we-stopped-mass-deportations/>