

# Social Work 4ZZ3: Social Welfare: Practice Implications and Advocacy

* Thursday’s, January 9th – April 6th 2023
* 2:30-5:30pm
* Instructor: Mary Vaccaro
* Office hours: Upon request
* Email: [vaccarm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vaccarm@mcmaster.ca)

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# Course Overview: Course Description:

This course is focused on developing a deeper understanding of social welfare programs and policy in Canada Throughout this course we will consider how social policy is shaped by history, values, and the participation of people eager to bring about social change.

As a class, we will explore the ways ‘social policy’ influences social service work organizations, and our direct practice as ‘social workers.’ We will also study advocacy strategies – particularly those led by people and communities directly impacted by social injustice.

This course is fundamentally about supporting emerging social workers to recognize the ways social policy impacts all of us; and to find ways of becoming policy advocates in their own work.

**Course Objectives:**   
  
The course will be divided into three overarching learning objectives:

1. Develop a better understanding of the historical and current context of the social welfare state in Canada;
2. Understand the ways social welfare policies impacts organizations and positions social workers as social policy actors and resistors;
3. Explore effective advocacy approaches and skills when engaging in social policy change work and develop an appreciation for the importance of identity, experience, and participation in advocacy work

We will explore these central themes in ways that are connected to some of the contemporary social welfare issues impacting Hamilton and Canada. Guest speakers engaged in local policy advocacy, social workers negotiating their role as policy actors and resistors and people with lived experience who are making change with/for their communities will be invited to ground our analysis of the course themes.

**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 & Required Texts:

## All lectures will be delivered in person on Thursdays from 2:30-5:30pm. All content (including lecture slides, course readings, other course content) will be made available on Avenue to Learn.

## No required text. All readings will be made available on Avenue to Learn.

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. Reflection: Social Welfare, Hope and Imagining a Better Future –   
   February 9th - 25%
2. Critical Reflection Assignment on a Course Module   
   Depending upon course content chosen - 25%
3. Advocacy Skills Toolkit Assignment (In-class group Assignment)   
   March 23rd – 20%
4. Cumulative Assignment   
   April 13th – 30%

**Detailed outlines and rubrics are available for each assignment on Avenue to Learn.**

### Assignment One: Critical Reflection: Social Welfare, Hope, and Imagining a Better Future Due: February 9th - 25%

You will be asked to write a 3–5-page paper about a social issue that you care about. Examine how this social policy issue is connected to and underpinned by existing social policy. If you could imagine a better future for the people and communities impacted by this social justice issue, what would it look like? Identify policies that would need to be in place to allow for this kind of imagined future.

References are required (at least 2 references about the social issue you explore). You may also draw on relevant course material.

If you are interested in exploring an alternate submission format (including podcast, video, power-point presentation recording, photo essay or arts-based reflection), this can be negotiated with the instructor via email!

1. Assignment Two:

Critical Reflection on Course Content – 25%

The course focuses on three interconnected key themes – including:

1. Develop a better understanding of the historical and current context of the social welfare state in Canada;
2. Understand the ways social welfare policies impacts organizations and positions social workers as social policy actors and resistors;
3. Explore effective advocacy approaches and skills when engaging in social policy change work and develop an appreciation for the importance of identity, experience, and participation in advocacy work;

This assignment asks you to reflect on the material from the lectures/content connected to one of these themes.You are expected to bring in a range of content from at least **two** lectures – including, lecture material, guest speakers, and assigned readings. You should cite at least four different course materials. Your critical reflection will respond to the following question:

*How does the material you’ve engaged with affirm, challenge, and/or make you understand or question your role in social policy and advocacy?*

There are a range of accepted assignment formats for this reflection – including a 4-5 page paper, a photo essay, and a podcast. **See A2L for assignment outline and rubric.**

### Assignment Three: Advocacy Strategies - In-Class Group Assignment - 20%

**Due: March 23rd (end of class)**

During this assignment, you will work as a small group to contribute to a resource being developed by the School of Social Work focused on approaches to advocacy. As a class, we will contribute to developing a series of resources that will provide context for how to engage in various advocacy strategies. This assignment will gather preliminary research to inform this toolkit.

You will work as a small group and all work will be done during class time. You will select what advocacy strategy you are most interested in by **February 23rd – based on this the instructor will form groups and post them in advance of March 9th.**

**An alternative individual assignment will be posted for students who are unable to engage in group work!**

**In class group work – March 9th, March 16th, and March 23rd**

You will be provided with in-class time to work on developing a resource for your advocacy strategy. Your group will be provided with a template to guide you in completing this assignment and you will have access to a module about your strategy on A2L (which will have a range of resources about your chosen strategy!).

4.) **Assignment Four:**

**Final Assignment -30%**  
 **Due: April 6th**

You have two options for the final assignment. **Full outlines and rubrics will be made available on A2L.**

A: **Reflecting on your role as an emerging social worker and policy actor:**

Reflect on your role as an emerging social worker and policy actor – consider how you will take learning from this course and apply it to your career moving forward. Use and cite materials from the course throughout this assignment (at least 8 resources from the course).

**Format:** 8-10 pages or 15-minute podcast/presentation/video.

B: **Policy analysis**:

This option asks you to continue to build on the social issue you identified in assignment 1. You will be asked to engage in a policy analysis including how various level of governmental policy, organizational policy, and other policy domains shape this ‘social issue’. You will also be asked to identify some potential advocacy pathways and existing advocacy work being done to create social and policy change.

**Format:** 8-10 pages or 15-minute podcast/presentation/video.

# 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, student number, 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).
* Unless otherwise noted, students are expected to make use of relevant professional and social science literature and other bodies of knowledge in their term assignments, including course material.
* When submitting, please keep a copy of your assignments.

*If you are interested in submitting assignments in an alternate format, please contact Mary via email to negotiate form and style.*

## Avenue to Learn:

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

All assignments will be submitted in the drop-boxes on Avenue to Learn unless you arrange an alternate way to submit with the instructor. Each assignment has an assignment outline and rubric, which you can find under the ‘Assignments’ tab on the Avenue to Learn platform for our course.

You will receive your graded assignment and feedback for your assignment via Avenue to Learn. As a teaching team, we intend to return assignments back to you with feedback within 14 days of your submission. This cannot be guaranteed for assignments submitted after the due date.

### Added Statement for Foundation Course Outlines:

This course is a foundation course. Students must obtain a minimum grade of C+ in all foundation courses and a “Pass” in each placement (as well as maintain a minimum overall GPA of 6.0) in order to remain in the Social Work program.

Please see the Resources section of our [website for details on the policy regarding minimum grade requirements in foundation courses and what happens if these are not met.](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/minimum-grade-requirements-in-the-bsw-programs.docx/view)

### 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.

# Working Together - Instructor & Student Responsibilities:

* Students and the teaching team are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment.
* Students are asked to be present, having read the material and prepared to engage in the classroom environment.
* Your instructor and your marking T.A are available via email (or by appointment) to answer your questions and provide clarification as we move through the term.
* This course will include lectures from guest speakers including social workers from the Hamilton community and people with lived experience who are engaged in contemporary social policy advocacy. It is important to be mindful when sharing about the content of these lectures with folks outside of the class.

**Course Attendance****:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you anticipate difficulty with this, please speak with the instructor. Missing a substantial number of classes often results in essential course requirements not being met (these must be met to pass the course). Students who are close to missing 20% of classes must contact the instructor to discuss.

During the weeks of **March 9th, March 16th, and March 23rd**, we will be doing in class groupwork. If you are unable to attend more than one of these weeks, please contact the instructor **in advance** to negotiate an alternate assignment.

### 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.

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.

### 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.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording.
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

## Confidentiality

A cornerstone of professional social work relationships is confidentiality with respect to all matters associated with professional services to clients. Social workers demonstrate respect for the trust and confidence placed in them by clients, communities, and other professionals by protecting the privacy of client information and respecting the client’s right to control when or whether this information will be shared with third parties (CASW Code of Ethics, 2005). It is recognized that in many social work courses students participate and learn by discussing their placement, work and lived experiences. As such, it is important to be mindful of the importance of confidentiality.

### 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.

### Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### Extensions and Incomplete Courses

Extensions   
All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor. Whenever possible, please try to negotiate extensions in advance of the assignment deadline.

Disclosures to the instructor of personal issues, illness or injury or extenuating circumstances are not required for extensions.

If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

Incomplete courses

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-november-2019.docx/view) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or* *Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair (*[*vengris@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)*).*

**Course Weekly Topics and Readings:**

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All readings are available on Avenue to Learn

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| **Date:** | **Topics:** | **Readings:** |
| **January 12th** | **Introduction to 4ZZ3**   Topics:  Orientation to the course Introduction to social welfare, social policy, and advocacy  **Case Study:** Opening a safer drug use space  Power mapping: Social policy decision makers, influencers, resistors, and enactors | **No Readings** |
| **January 19th** | **Module 1:  Social Welfare and Social Policy**  Topics: Context of social welfare in Canada What is social policy?  -  Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and MMWIG2 Calls to Justice | Hick, S. (2015). **The History of Social Welfare in Canada,** Social Welfare in Canada. Pages 26 – 53  Torjman, S. (2005). **What is Policy*?*** The Caledon Institute of Social Policy: Ottawa, ON.  **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action.** Retrieved online:  <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf>  Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. **Calls for Justice.** Retrieved online: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\_for\_Justice.pdf |
| **January 26th** | **Module 1:**  **Social Welfare and Social Policy**  Topic: Rights-based policy advocacy  Focus on:  Sex work and the lawGuest Speaker: Tamara Carter (*Maggie’s*  Toronto, ON)  Disability advocacy and the law  Guest Speaker: Emunah Woolf | **Upholding and promoting human rights, justice, and access for migrant sex workers: Laws affecting migrant sex workers.** Retrieved online:  <https://576a91ec-4a76-459b-8d05-4ebbf42a0a7e.filesusr.com/ugd/5bd754_c5dcee7f55114eaf82ba5ddee244fb68.pdf>  **Sex Work on the Hill: A guide to getting involved in the legislative processes that impact our lives.** Retrieved online from:  <http://sexworklawreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Advocacy-Guide-PART-I-English.pdf>  Woolf, E., & de Bie, A. (2022). **Politicizing self-advocacy: Disabled students navigating ableist expectations in post secondary education.** *Disabled Studies Quarterly (42),* 1.  **10 Principles of Disability Justice.** Sins Invalid. Women’s Studies Quarterly. Retrieved online:  https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bed3674f8370ad8c02efd9a/t/5f1f0783916d8a179c46126d/1595869064521/10\_Principles\_of\_DJ-2ndEd.pdf |
| **February 2nd** | **Module 1:**  **Social Welfare and Social Policy**  Topic: Working under ‘big’ policy  Focus:  The intersection of health care policy, social service policy and ethics  Guest Speaker: Rochelle Maurice  Child welfare policy  Guest Speaker: Jeff Black | Ahmed, S. (2007). ‘**You end up doing the document rather than doing the doing’: Diversity, race equality and the politics of documentation.** Ethnic and Racial Studies. (30) (4), pp. 590-609.  Ambrose-Miller, W., & Ashcroft, R. (2016). **Challenges Faced by Social Workers as Members of Interprofessional Collaborative Health Care Teams,** Health & Social Work, (41), 2, 101-109.  --  Petrella, A., & Trocmé, N. (2022). **Ontario’s Child Welfare System. CWRP Information Sheet #239E.** Montreal, QC: Centre for Research on Children and Families. Retrieved from: Ontario’s child welfare system | Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal.  Parada, H., Barnoff, L. & Coleman, B. (2007). “**Negotiating professional agency”: Social work decision-making within the Ontario child welfare system**. Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 34(4), 35-56. |
| **February 9th** | **Module 2: The Role of Social Service Organizations and Social Workers: Policy Actors and Policy resistors**  Topic:  Collaborating for Responsive Policy Change:  Canada’s Drug Poisoning Epidemic  **A panel discussion.** | A series of news articles, videos and other resources will be made available on A2L. |
| **February 16th** | **Module 2: The Role of Social Service Organizations and Social Workers: Policy Actors and Policy resistors**  Topic:  Working within social services organizations  Negotiating and working within and against organizational policy | Marston, G. and McDonald, C. (2012). **Getting beyond ‘Heroic Agency’ in Conceptualizing Social Workers as Policy Actors in the Twenty-First Century**. British Journal of Social Work, 42, 1022 – 1038.  Aronson, J. & Sammon, S. (2000). **Practice amid social service cuts and restructuring: Working with the contradictions of “small victories”.** Canadian Social Work Review, 17(2), 167-187. |
| **READING WEEK** | **February 20-26** |  |
| **March 2nd** | **Module 2: The Role of Social Service Organizations and Social Workers: Policy Actors and Policy Resistors**  Topics: Social workers as policy actors and as policy resistors | Joris De Corte & Rudi Roose (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.  Strier, R. & Bershtling, O. (2016). **Professional Resistance in Social Work: Counterpractice Assemblages**. Social Work, 61(2), 111 – 118. |
| **March 9th** | **Module 3: Advocacy Strategies**  Topics:  Advocacy strategies for social policy changes  The risks and benefits of engaging in advocacy  **In-class group assignment – advocacy strategies** | Cave, J. (2016). T**he Changing Landscape for Nonprofit Policy Advocacy.** The Philanthropist.1 – 8.  **Advocacy Strategies Module:** On A2L you will find a series of videos and examples of various advocacy strategies. |
| **March 16th** | **Module 3:  Advocacy Strategies**  Topic:  An intersectional feminist approach to popular education: Building skills for advocacy and activism with girls  Guest Lecture: Alexe Bernier  **In-class group assignment – advocacy strategies** | Bernier, A., & Winstanley, S. (2021). **“Speak with Girls, Not for Them”,** Girlhood Studies, 14(1), 19-35.  Women Centre of Calgary (2020). **Girls Lead: A toolkit for supporting girls activism and leadership.** Retrieved online:  *Pages -* 1-18  Appendix C: Actions for Social Change <https://www.womenscentrecalgary.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Girls-Lead-YYC-1.pdf> |
| **March 23rd** | **Module 3:  Advocacy Strategies**  Topic:  Analysis of local advocacy strategies  **In-class group assignment – advocacy strategies** | We will review a series of examples of advocacy strategies used to influence social change. A list of materials is available on A2L. |
| **March 30th** | **Module 3: Advocacy Strategies**  Topic:  Identity, experience, and participation in advocacy and policy change making  Panel Discussion:  Community members engaged in social change and policy work | Nelson, A. (2020). **Nothing about us without us: Centering lived experience and revolutionary care in efforts to end and prevent homelessness in Canada.** Radical Housing Journal, 2(2), pp. 83-100.  Lived Experience Advisory Council. (2016). ***Nothing about us without us: Seven principles for leadership and inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness****.* Toronto: The Homeless Hub Press. www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs |
| **April 6th** | Topic: The emotional toll of social policy advocacy work  Wrap up & final reflections on 4ZZ3 | Malenfant, J., Nichols, N., and Schwan, K. (2019) **Chasing funding to ‘eat our own tail’: The invisible emotional work of making social change**, Alberta: *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research,*10(2), pp. 40-54.   **Resisting Burnout with Justice-Doing** Part 1: Collective Care and Ethical Pain. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHNoFBS5a0g> |