Course Description:
This course focuses on legislation and judicial decision making that impacts working families as examined in the context of social work policy and practice. Social work students have the potential to analyze and inform such legislation, thereby encouraging a more just system, inclusive of all people, regardless of race, class, gender, or other demographics.

Students will engage in discussion and action surrounding government policy and how the current state of working families has implications for policy. The class will review the process of policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. The students will have the opportunity to learn the dynamic field of policy and apply it to social work with working families.

This course builds upon the foundation course in social welfare policy and enables students to use an action-based approach to provide policy-informed services and to not only understand, but to participate in policy support and change.

Course Objectives:
Knowledge Objectives:
1. Students will examine the key trends and issues in family policymaking.
2. Students will be able to identify relevant policies to their interest area.
3. Students will understand the impact of policies on different types of working families.

Skills Objectives:
1. Students will be able to conduct a search for relevant policies, cases, and legislation.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze a piece of legislation and the effect of the legislation on diverse working family systems.
3. Students will be able to formulate strategies for reaching out to policymakers and enacting change.
4. Students will create an issue brief, detailing the relevance and importance of a particular work & family policy issue, in order to inform policymakers in their legislation process.

Value Objectives:
1. Students will be exposed to the ethical imperative to include policy awareness and influence in their work as effective and compassionate Social Workers, remembering that policy affects the integrity of both individuals and systems.
2. Students will implement the values and ethics of the social work profession in their analysis of family policies, understanding the needs of vulnerable populations, human worth, and social justice as Social Work goals in work & family policy making.
3. Students will understand the significance of legislation, litigation, and administrative rule as policy making tools and the relevance of policies to the competence and success of our communities, individuals’, and human relationships.

Course Evaluations and Assignments:
Class participation (20% of Grade)
- Regular attendance
- Discussion in class sessions
Critical and constructive analysis and evaluation of peers’ policy presentations

Midterm - Getting the Legislators’ Attention (40% of Grade)
Due: October 17th

The midterm assignment will be to create an influential written product for state legislators on a work & family policy topic of your choosing, related to your field placement. Policymakers are strapped for time and resources; how can the class, as experts and advocates, assist policymakers and their staff in receiving critical research and information?

This product may include:

- a brief history of the problem (5%)
- research and statistics on the effect to constituents (10%)
- summary of the relevant legislation/cases (10%)
- global indicators or implications (5%)
- resources (5%)
- other materials that may be of interest to your target policymaker. (5%)

Keep in mind how you will send this information, to whom, when, and in what format. Thoroughly develop a plan for distribution of the product, and prepare to select who to send it to. You will be asked to distribute at least one copy of your product.

Final – A Policy Defense (40% of Grade)
Due: December 12th

The final assignment will be to defend both a “yea” and a “nay” position on a work & family policy of your choice. Through the course you will research the alternative positions, and prepare an issue brief containing both positions. The page limit for each position is 7 pages. References must be included. (30%)

At the end of the semester you will be asked to present in defense of one of the positions in a ten minute oral argument. You will not know beforehand which position you will be defending, rather, one of the positions will be chosen for you on the day of your presentation. Your classmates will evaluate your oral presentation on the persuasiveness, relevance, and style. The paper is due one week after your defense. (10%)

Required Textbooks:

All other required readings will be available through the WEBCT page for this course, or on reserve in the Social Work Library.

**Course Outline:**

**Session One (9-5): Definitions, Trends, and Models**
- Definitions in Work & Family Policy
- The Goal of Work & Family Policy
- Work & Family Trends

**Required Readings:**

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has compiled definitions of family at: [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=academics](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=academics)

Pick two that are interesting to you and be prepared to discuss in class.

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has also compiled statistics on the changing definition of family: [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=1&area=academics](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=1&area=academics)

Pick two that are interesting to you and be prepared to discuss in class.

Bogenshneider, Forewords & Chapters 1-5


**Additional Readings:**

Zimmerman, Chapters 1-3.

**Session Two (9-12): National Context**
- Political Culture
- Attitudes toward Government and Families
- Family Policies and Family Well-Being

**Required Readings:**


Bogenschneider, Part 1.

Zimmerman, Chapters 4 & 5.

**Additional Readings:**

Jansson, Chapters 6-8.

**Session Three (9-19): Analyzing Work & Family Policies (class will be in the computer lab)**
- Where and How to Find Relevant Policies
- Language
- LexisNexis State Capital Software
- Westlaw
- Let’s not forget the courts: Finding Case law

**Required Readings:**


**Session Four (9-26): Policy Frameworks**  
Converting Perceptions of Family Problems into Policies and Programs for Families  
The Institutional Framework  
Rational Choice Framework  
Interest Group Theory, Elite Theory, and Systems Theory

*Required Readings:*


Zimmerman, Chapters 9-14.

**Session Five (10-3): Family Frameworks**  
Tools for Conceptualizing Family Well-Being  
Families as Social Systems and Systems of Exchange and Choice  
Symbolic Interaction, Family Stress Theory, Conflict Theory, Feminist and Cultural Theories  
**Bring outline and progress of your outreach product.**

*Required Readings:*


Bogenschneider, Chapters 6-8.

Zimmerman, Chapters 15-17.

**Session Six (10-10): Examples of Government Action**  
Corporate Welfare  
Current State of Engagement  
**Mid-term assignment due**

*Required Readings:*

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has compiled bills and statutes relevant to working families: [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/bills.php?area=policy](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/bills.php?area=policy)  
Please pick two “topics” and be ready to discuss any interesting findings you discovered.

Lenhoff, D. & Bell, L. Government Support for Working Families and Communities: Family and Medical Leave as a Case Study.  
http://www.johnsonfdn.org/images/work_family_democracy.pdf


**Session Seven (10-17): State Policy and Social Work**
Devolution to the States
States’ Policy Approaches to Families
Guest Lecturer: Being an Aide

**Required Readings:**

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has compiled state-level policies: [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=academics](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic_extended.php?id=15&type=6&area=academics)

Pick two states besides MA and look into their legislation for working families. What do you notice? Are there themes?


Zimmerman, Chapter 8.

**Additional Readings:**


**Session Eight (10-24): Caring for Children**
Spillover
Parenting and work role overload

**Required Readings:**


**Session Nine (11-07): Flexibility (and other time-resources)**
Flexible Work Schedules
Telework
Part-time Work
Phased Retirement
Family Leave

**Required Readings:**


Additional Readings:


Session Ten (11-14): The Aging Population

Older workers
Older caregivers
Caring for elders while managing work

Required Readings:


Additional Readings:


Session Eleven (11-21): Income

Calculating poverty – who is getting benefits/welfare?
How income impacts families

Required Readings:

The University of Wisconsin has an Institute for Research on Poverty: http://www.irp.wisc.edu/.

Please review “Who was poor in 2004” at http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq3.htm. In addition, pick two recent publications from this website and be ready to present in class.

**Additional Readings:**


**Session Twelve (11-28): Global Perspectives**

How are we different?
How are we the same?
**First half of class will defend their policy**

**Required Readings:**


Chapter 1 – Perspective through International Comparison in the Evaluation of Family Support
Chapter 8 – A Culturally Relevant Model for Evaluating Family Services in Hong Kong
Chapter 15 – Evaluation of the Contact Family Service in Sweden

**Additional Readings:**


**Session Thirteen (12-5): Session is Closed**

The Policy-Family Relationship in Moving Forward
How to effectively make change and communicate to policymakers
Reflections
Goals
**Second half of the class will defend their policy**

**Required Readings:**

Bogenschneider, Chapters 9, 10, & 15.

Zimmerman, Chapters 18 & 19.

**Website Resources for Policy:**

American Legislative Exchange Council
[www.alec.org](http://www.alec.org)

"More than a quarter century ago, a small group of state legislators and conservative policy advocates met in Chicago to implement a vision: A bipartisan membership association for conservative state lawmakers who shared a common belief in limited government, free markets, federalism, and individual liberty."
The Center for Policy Alternatives.
www.cfpa.org
“The Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) empowers state legislators by simultaneously working at three levels: providing values-based leadership development programs to make legislators into more effective advocates for progressive policy; developing user-friendly policy tools on a wide variety of issues, making it easy for legislators to introduce and argue for progressive legislation; and building a strong, coordinated network of legislators across the states, enabling them to support one another as they take on the often-scary and sometimes-lonely job of leading the fight for progressive change.”

The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars
http://familyimpactseminars.org/
“Because ideas are powerful political tools and because research produces policy-relevant ideas, the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars aims to strengthen connections between research and state policymaking. The Institute has assumed the mission of the Family Impact Seminar founded in 1976 to build capacity for family-centered policymaking. The Institute has resources for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and those who work to connect research and policymaking.”

Institute for Women’s Policy Research
www.iwpr.org
“IWPR focuses on issues of poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family issues, health and safety, and women’s civic and political participation. The Institute works with policymakers, scholars, and public interest groups around the country to design, execute, and disseminate research that illuminates economics and social policy issues affecting women and families, and to build a network of individuals and organizations that conduct and use women-oriented policy research.”

The National Conference of State Legislatures
www.ncsl.org
“The National Conference of State Legislatures was founded in 1975 with the conviction that legislative service is one of democracy’s worthiest pursuits. NCSL is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues. NCSL is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of state governments before Congress and federal agencies.”

National Governors Association
www.nga.org
“The National Governors Association (NGA) is the collective voice of the nation’s governors and one of Washington, D.C.’s, most respected public policy organizations. NGA provides governors and their senior staff members with services that range from representing states on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on key federal issues to developing policy reports on innovative state programs and hosting networking seminars for state government executive branch officials.”