I. The Policy Project

A. Topics

Examples of potential topics that students have done in the past include: child care, economic support for elderly women, long-term care for the elderly, housing for those with severe mental illness, child neglect treatment, child abuse prevention, and health insurance for the uninsured.

Tips: The topic should be within the realm of social welfare policy (thus, not defense policy, not environmental policy, etc. poverty eradication or reduction is the focus). While some in the past have selected a particular program (treatment of homemakers in social security; whether all unemployed people should get unemployment insurance), it is much better to select topics that are problem-oriented rather than program-oriented. Be careful about selecting a topic that is too large. Please write a 1-2 paragraph paper explaining your preferred topic and submit it to me no later than the seventh week of class.

B. Finding and selecting sources

You are required to annotate 5 pieces of information (journals, newspapers, news magazines, web-based information). At least two of these must have a publication date after January 1, 2016. If you need to conduct an interview to fill in information, that is also quite acceptable. Many sources of information are possible, including program brochures, research reports, etc. The social work library has an online database that will search abstracts. Some sources for data on social problems and on program information include: Social Security Bulletin; Social Work Almanac; Statistical Abstract; and the Encyclopedia of Social Work. You are expected to select a variety of sources, at least one of which includes empirical research. You are required to select sources that represent a variety of perspectives.

What to look for: At the conclusion of your readings, you should be able to answer at least the following questions about your topic:

1. What is the social problem underlying the issue? How serious is it? How many people are affected? Does the policy have differential effects people of color?

2. What are the current policies that address the problem? How would you describe them in terms of goals and the four questions (who gets? what do they get? how do they get it? who pays?)

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current policies?

4. What are two proposed policies in this area? Which, if any, of the current disadvantages would they address? Do they come with their own disadvantages?

Obviously any one article will not answer all these questions; the idea is that at the end of the project you will be able to answer these questions.

C. Required product

The take-home final paper (exam) will consist of a series of general questions that each student will answer about her/his own policy topic. For example, questions might include, "What is the social problem you are examining? How serious is it? What current policies are in place to address this problem?" Many students find it helpful to organize their notes in terms of the questions listed above. Distributed: December 8th, 2018 Due: December 15th, 2018
II. Policy Presentation

For this assignment, students give a **brief oral presentation** to class on their topic. Oral presentations will be conducted on **December 11, 2018**. The amount of time you will probably be 10-12 minutes. I have designed the oral presentation to focus on people of color, but if you would prefer to focus on a different vulnerable group, contact the instructor. Your presentation should answer **one** of the following 4 sets of questions:

1. What is your policy topic? What is the social problem underlying the issue? Does this problem affect people of color differently than others?

2. What is your policy topic? What are current policies in this area? Are people of color disproportionately affected by these policies? How?

3. What is your policy topic? What are some effects of current policy? Do current policies have differential effects on people of color?

4. What is your policy topic? What is one proposal for change in this area? Would this policy change have differential effects on people of color? How?

You must tell me **in advance** whether you need audiovisual equipment other than the document camera. I will **cut people off** at the conclusion of the allotted time. Thus, I’d strongly recommend practicing and timing your presentation.