BLAU REACTION PARAGRAPHS

Note: I’ve left the summary and key concepts in here as a guide to the chapter. These concepts will be the primary ones used in the glossary quiz in the final class session. There is one common question for all students and you can choose among the other questions but please don’t team up and answer the same questions as your classmate, as I want to be able to call on students in the hope of hearing answers to a diversity of questions. It is best to write your answers offline and then enter blackboard just to paste the answers in.

Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 1

Summary: Students entering social work programs come with a variety of experiences and backgrounds, as well as a diversity of career goals. Yet regardless of their initial interests, all soon find themselves asking the question, “Why won’t the system let me do what I know is best for my client?” The first session addresses this issue by helping students to understand the structural impediments that undermine our ability to do our jobs and to understand the link between social policy and successful social work practice. After reading the assigned introductory, students should have a clear understanding of how every form of social work practice embodies social policy and why social policy is such an essential subject for study.

Key Concepts: Social policy, social advocacy, social problem, internal and external resources, evolutionism, cyclical theories, historical materialism, “grand” theories of social change, market economy, ideology, dominant ideology

For all students: Blau argues that one of the most crucial functions of government within a market economy is the creation of an environment where business will prosper. What do you think about this argument?

1. How does the construction of a social problem help to create a social policy?
2. How do social policies shape what social workers do?
3. How does a problem get to be defined as a “social problem” as opposed to an “individual problem”?
4. Discuss the relationship between self-interest and the definition of social problems.
5. In what ways might we argue that America’s “War on Drugs” is an example of the arbitrary construction of a social problem? Give some examples to indicate how this definition of the problem represents the self-interest of certain groups.
6. Discuss how a social policy might make the job of a social worker more difficult.
7. Give an example of a current social policy that makes it more difficult for social workers to do their job.
8. How have social workers employed in hospital settings been negatively affected by changing social policies during the last two decades?
9. What social policies in your field of social work practice have changed the nature of how social workers do their jobs?
10. Sometimes social programs seem to lack needed resources, be poorly designed to meet an existing need, and to have conflicting objectives. Blau suggests that these programs may be designed to fail. Why would government create programs that are designed to fail? What do you think about this issue?

Session 3: Definitions and Function of Social Welfare Policy
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 2;

Summary: In order to be effective social workers, students need to have an understanding of what social work policy is, how policy influences the agencies and programs for which they work, and how policy affects the day-to-day activities of the social worker in the field. This session’s assigned readings begin with the traditional view of what policy is and, in particular, what social welfare policy is and argue that this traditional view is both too narrow and too simplistic. By the end of the session students should understand how social welfare policy is imbedded in economic, political and social policies, as well as how any one policy performs social, political and economic functions that often are at odds with one another. In addition, students should also understand how social welfare policy has functioned to both assist and to disempower particular groups of people in this country.

Key Concepts: social welfare policy, welfare state, safety net, fiscal welfare, corporate welfare, “non-decision” policy making, ”deserving poor,” “undeserving poor,” pre-industrial society, industrial society, the social functions of social welfare policy, economic functions of social welfare policy, political functions of social welfare policy


For all students: Abramovitz discusses social welfare programs that are universal and social welfare programs that are categorical. What are some examples of programs that are universal? What is the general perception of the public about these programs? What are some examples of categorical programs? What is the general perception of these programs? Do you think the separation of social welfare programs into two different categories is a positive thing? Why or why not?

2.1. What is meant by the term “welfare state?” Do you think the U.S. is a welfare state? Explain your answer.
2.2. Do you think that social services should be able to be provided by for-profit companies and individuals as well as by not-for-profit agencies? Why or why not? What are some of the arguments used by social workers who oppose the provision of social services by for profit entities?
2.3. In the United States, some see the tax code as creating a system of “fiscal welfare” because our system of tax exemptions, deductions and credits address the same needs as does direct
government spending on social welfare needs. However, since the benefits of the tax code accrue mainly to the middle-class and the wealthy, they conclude that, in reality, everyone is on welfare. Do you agree with this argument? Why or why not? What type of tax exemptions and credits benefit the middle and upper classes? Business owners? If everyone is truly receiving “welfare” of some type, why do you think poor individuals and families who must access programs like TANF and Food Stamps are so stigmatized?

2.4. Abramovitz highlights the argument of some that the government, by providing social welfare benefits, lessens the impact of inequality and therefore mutes social unrest and political disruptions. Do you agree with this argument? Why or why not? Do you think that social workers by virtue of our role advocating for and overseeing the administration and distribution of social welfare services, inadvertently plays a role in maintaining the status quo?

2.5. The author argues that it is vitally important to maintain an awareness of the negative outcomes of certain social welfare policies, as well as an awareness of the instances where social welfare policies have been used deliberately to harm, disenfranchise or disempower certain groups. Do you agree with her position? Why or why not?

2.6. Abramovitz argues that one theme running through social welfare policy throughout our history has been the hostility toward single mothers. What examples does she cite of policies that support her argument? What has been the experience of your clients who are single mothers when they have attempted to access benefits?

2.7. Over time, government has assumed greater responsibility for promoting individual development and preventing social problems. How does the author account for this shift?

2.8. In what ways does a conservative analysis of the social functions of social welfare policy differ from a liberal analysis?

2.9. Policy analysts when discussing the economic functions of social welfare policy refer to its “automatic stabilizing” function. What exactly do they mean? How does this work?

2.10. Radicals argue that one of the economic functions of social welfare policy is to promote business profits by ensuring the productivity of the workforce. What is the substance of their argument? Do you agree? Why or why not?

2.11. Abramovitz argues that perhaps the best way to define social welfare policy is as an arena of struggle. What does she mean by this statement?

2.12. What argument does the author make to explain why the arena of social welfare policy is so hotly debated?

2.13. The author notes that the history of the social work profession has reflected its location between the individual and society and has led social workers to feel that they must choose between adjusting people and programs to circumstances or to challenging the status quo. How do you respond to her observation? What has been your experience in your field internship of your social work role? Have you had to choose between these roles? Are these two roles mutually exclusive?

Session 4: The Economy and Social Welfare
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 3;

Summary: Students often fail to understand the intersection of social and economic policy; they tend to see social welfare functions as something that stand apart from the marketplace. This session’s assigned and readings discuss the role of social welfare in the modern U.S. economy
and discuss many economic terms that must be understood in order to have a good basis for understanding the relationship between economics and social welfare policy. In addition, in this session we identify an important contradiction inherent in all social welfare policy: while social welfare policies are designed to protect people against the market, these policies also contribute to the market’s profitability.

Key Concepts: economics, scarce resources, infrastructure, commodities, the market, monopoly, recession, depression, income inequality, wealth distribution, fiscal policy, monetary policy, entitlements, social spending, macroeconomics, microeconomics, factors of production, Robber Barons, monopoly, oligopoly, globalization, social structure of accumulation, supply and demand, equilibrium price, pure public goods, a sticky price, gross domestic product, rate of inflation, demand-pull inflation, cost-push inflation, productivity, poverty line, balance of payments, trade deficit, federal debt, business cycle, Gini ratio, antitrust suit, externalities, Federal Reserve Bank, regressive tax, progressive tax, social spending, discretionary spending, work ethic, downsizing, minimum wage, aggregate demand

3: The Economy and Social Welfare: The relationship between the economy and social welfare. Some terms used: markets, recessions, income inequality, unemployment, fiscal and monetary policy, entitlements, and social spending. The rise of social welfare: how did a changing economy bring about the need for social welfare programs? Does social welfare complement or conflict with the private sector? Five distinctive features of the modern U.S. economy: downsizing, the decline in trade union membership, the shrinking value of the minimum wage, the spread of low-wage work, and the rising number of part-time and temporary workers. Corporate scandals, and the future of the U.S. economy.

For all students: Comment upon the following (Dover, 2003): “Ten years after the end of World War II, an op-ed column of the time pointed out, the Ohio River, flowing 981 miles from Pittsburgh to Cairo, carried twice the tonnage of the Panama Canal. The river region produced more chemicals, steel, and coal than the Ruhr Valley, although not without substantial federal investments in river improvement (Shriver and Wunderlin 2000: 391). Nature itself was the biggest investor, this commentator pointed out, with the region's coal veins and river arteries driving the cheap production of electricity, smelting, etc. One electricity plant alone used 1.4 billion gallons of water a day, more than New York City for all purposes; a ton of steel used seventy tons of water, with a barrel of oil using 18 tons. Ohio's industrial and public utility enterprises exploited these natural resources. These abundant resources lead to cheap electricity, which attracted the aluminum production industry to the Ohio Valley. The insatiable demand for electricity also resulted in Ohio being slated for three Atomic Energy Commission facilities. These observations lead the commentator, William H. Hessler, to ask, "How long will it be until there is an honest recognition that our economic system is a hybrid of public and private initiative, of public and private investment?" (Shriver and Wunderlin 2000: 394). In a sense, the conclusions of this study can help add to that recognition, by highlighting and clarifying the extent to which public, nonprofit, and religious property are part and parcel of an overall system of real property which is itself a hybrid of public, private and nonprofit property. As David Tucker suggested once, ‘Perhaps capitalism is not what we think it is.’” Based upon the above excerpt and Blau 3, what kind of economy did you think we lived in prior to reading this? What
do you think it is now? Also, how has this influenced your thinking about the nature of our economy and its relationship to social welfare?"

3.1. This highlights an important contradiction inherent in our political economy: social welfare stands in opposition to the marketplace, yet simultaneously enhances its functioning. What do the authors mean by this statement?
3.2. Who were the “Robber Barons?” How did they transform the structure of modern business? Did they have a positive or negative impact? Explain.
3.3. Many liberal and radical policy analysts have criticized the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for the negative role they play in the world economy, but particularly in the economies of third world countries. What specific criticisms are leveled at the World Bank and IMF? What do you think about their role in the global economy? Explain.
3.4. Some policy analysts feel that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not a good measure of the overall functioning of the economy. What arguments do they make to support their position? Do you agree or disagree?
3.5. What problems do policy analysts identify with the unemployment rate as it is presently calculated?
3.6. Why is the poverty line considered an “absolute” method of calculating poverty?
3.7. Define the terms “balance of payments,” “trade deficit” and “trade surplus” and indicate what they tell us about the economy. Do you think these are useful measures of our economic well-being? Why or why not?
3.8. Describe the cycle that economists refer to as the business cycle.
3.9. How do the authors account for the tremendous wealth and income inequality in the United States? Do these factors support or refute the argument that “a rising tide raises all boats?”
3.10. Some policy analysts have criticized the Federal Reserve Bank as being anti-labor and pro-business. What arguments do they make to support this position? Do you think this is a valid argument?
3.11. What are some of the factors that contributed to the development of the market economy during the last hundred years?
3.12. What is the efficiency vs. equality argument that some economists make when talking about the relationship between social welfare and the economy? What is the counter argument made by other economists? Give some examples.
3.13. The author argues that the public sector is essential to the growth of the private sector and that the two grow together. How does the author support his argument?
3.14. Blau cites five factors that help us to understand why the economic peaks of the last fifteen years have benefitted some and not others. Identify and discuss these five factors.
3.15. Blau identifies just four elections in U.S. history that can be characterized as ‘critical elections.’ What were these elections?
3.16. Political scientist James Morone has developed a theory about the cycle of social reform to complement the theory of critical elections. His theory posits the existence of a ‘democratic wish.’ What is Morone’s theory and what does he mean by the ‘democratic wish?’
3.17. Blau addresses the political functions that social welfare performs. What are these?
Session 5: The Politics of Social Welfare Policy
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 4.

Summary: Like economics, the politics of social welfare policy goes a long way toward defining a policy’s essential features. But what exactly is “politics” and how does it help us to answer the question, “who should get what?” Drawing on ideas from political science, this session and assigned readings discuss the basic features of our political system. An emphasis on its conceptual underpinnings helps students understand the relationship between the functioning of this political system and the creation of social welfare policy. In addition and just as importantly, we address the issue of social change. Students learn that in order to be effective advocates for social change, they must grasp the interplay of politics and policy. Skillful use of this knowledge is vital if they are to succeed in fighting to implement social policies that affirm the worth of every human being.

Key Concepts: politics, electoral activities, non-electoral activities, interest-group pluralism, public choice theory, elite theory, Marxist elite theory, direct democracy, indirect democracy, representative democracy, federalism, dual federalism (106), cooperative federalism (106), judicial review, bureaucracy, a system of checks and balances, “soft” money, “hard” money, divided government, critical elections, Morone’s theory of the cycle of social reform, American “exceptionalism.”


For all students: What experiences have you had with bureaucracies? What kind of experiences have your clients had with bureaucracies? When you have had a problem with a bureaucracy, how have you handled the problem? When your clients have had trouble with a bureaucracy, how have they handled the problem? What might account for some differences between how you handled a bureaucratic problem and how your clients have handled bureaucratic problems?

4.1. There are both supporters and critics of the pluralist theory of political decision-making. What are the main arguments of those who favor a pluralist approach? What are the main arguments of those who criticize pluralism? Where do you stand on this issue?

4.2. Give some examples of both electoral and non-electoral activities that are part of what the author defines as ‘politics.’

4.3. There are a number of criticisms that can be made of public choice theory. What are they?

4.4. What is the main difference between pluralism and elite theory?

4.5. What arguments does Marxist elite theory make?

4.6. Blau identifies a longstanding debate among political scientists about the nature of democracy. What are the two sides in this debate?

4.7. What are the four domains in which the President, under the United States’ democratic
system, takes responsibility?

4.8. Blau describes the history of the Supreme Court as being characterized by two competing tensions. What are these tensions? Give some examples of each.

4.9. Blau notes that the way the judicial system functions and how justices make their decisions is part of the larger debate among scholars and jurists about the proper way to interpret the Constitution. What are the three basic positions in this debate? Which position do you agree with? Why?

4.10. What is a bureaucracy? What are its distinctive features? What types of tasks does a bureaucracy handle well? What types of situations are usually not handled well by bureaucracies?

4.11. Blau notes that the present day functioning of our political parties has deep roots in the American system. Explain.

4.12. Blau cites a number of possible reasons that voter participation is so low in the United States. What are these reasons? Why do you think the percentage of people who vote in the U.S. is as low as it is? Do your clients vote? Why or why not?

4.13. What are the arguments for and against a divided government?

4.14. Blau identifies just four elections in U.S. history that can be characterized as ‘critical elections.’ What were these elections?

4.15. Political scientist James Morone has developed as theory about the cycle of social reform to complement the theory of critical elections. His theory posits the existence of a ‘democratic wish.’ What is Morone’s theory and what does he mean by the ‘democratic wish?’

4.16. Blau addresses the political functions that social welfare performs. What are these?

4.17. Blau argues that in order to be successful social workers, we need to understand the larger political environment in which social workers function. What points does Blau make?

Session 6: Ideological Perspectives and Conflicts (Continued)
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 5;

Summary: As a system of beliefs that explains the structure of society, ideologies and ideological conflicts have existed for a very long time. Yet the nature of ideology and the way it can affect our daily lives are rarely discussed. For social workers, in particular, it is very important to have an understanding of how ideology affects both social welfare policy and social work practices. The answers to questions such as who should receive social work services, how eligibility is determined, what services should be universal, etc. all reflect the ideological values of those formulating the policies. By the end of this session (and the next session) and these two session’s assigned and readings, students will come to understand the issues of power and how the structure of inequality influences explanations of reality. We will explore different perspectives representing the interests of specific groups in society about human need, the role of government, the characterization of human nature, the meaning of work, and the nature of the family, as well as explanations of racial inequality.

Key Concepts: ideology, dominant ideology, human nature, social conservatism, laissez-faire conservativism, neoclassical liberalism, pragmatic liberalism, humanistic liberalism, radicalism, liberal feminism, cultural feminism, socialist feminism

5: Ideological Perspectives and Conflicts: What is an ideology? Descriptions of four main
political perspectives: conservative, liberal, radical, feminist. Eight important ideological disputes: how these perspectives differ on: 1. Human nature; 2. The relationship of the individual to society; 3. The determination of need; 4. The role of the government; 5. The meaning of work; 6. The nature of the family; 7. The issue of racial equality; 8. The benefits of professionalism

For all students: Based upon page 14, Table 1.4 of Popple/Leighinger’s Social Work, Social Welfare (see the document Conservative Liberal and Radical Perspectives) on Prof. Dover’s website at (http://tinyurl.com/9nte9k), and based upon Prof. Dover’s document Alternative to the Left, Center Right Continuum (a little bit higher up on that same webpage), how would you classify your own political ideology? Be sure to comment upon whether you see your views as conservative, liberal or radical for each of the rows in the Table. Also, please comment upon your reading of this, including whether or not it has affected your own political outlook, and why.

5.1. The author refers to having an ideology as like having a road map. What does the author mean?
5.2. Where do we get different ideological messages? Give some examples of the types of ideological messages we get.
5.3. The author notes that mainstream ideology defends and rationalizes a society’s particular social, legal, moral, religious, political and economic arrangements. She cites several ways in which this happens. What are these ways and what are the implications of these processes for social workers?
5.4. What are different ways in which individuals and groups may resist mainstream ideas or “take on the system”?
5.5. Abramovitz identifies several key questions in social welfare policy where ideological differences can result in very different approaches to the provision of social welfare. What are these key questions?
5.6. There are five distinguishing features of the standard model of a profession. What are these features? Describe potential problems associated with each feature.

Session 7: Social Movements and Social Change
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 6;

Summary: Usually, when individuals try to solve a problem or seek relief from a hardship, they act on their own. Yet collective action—the efforts of individuals joining to promote social change—is nonetheless central to the development of modern societies. A key tenet of the social work profession is the belief that people acting together have the power to affect and reshape the social order. This session and assigned and readings highlight the role of collective behavior as a force for social change and introduces students to both the classical and the newer theories of social movements.

Key Concepts: collective action, individual resistance, social protest, social movements, “the personal is political,” crowd theory, psychoanalytic social movement theory, mass society theory, structural strain theory, the theory of the underclass, structural functionalism, paradigmatic shift, rational crowd theory, relative deprivation theory, status strain theory, political opportunity
structures’ theory, rational choice theory, free rider concept, resource mobilization theory, new social movement theory, Marxist theory, socialist feminism, racial formation, racialization, collective action frames, master frames, free social spaces.

6: Social Movements and Social Change: Collective behavior as a force for change; Ways of becoming active: individual resistance, protest, and social movements. The welfare state as a site of control or emancipation. Theories of social movements and social change. Ideology and social movements: the role of the "master frame".

For all students: Abramovitz points out that feminists have argued that the personal is political. C. Wright Mills has pointed out, "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" and "Perhaps the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure.' This distinction is an essential tool of the sociological imagination and a feature of all classic work in social science.” Taking the chapter and the Mills quotes in mind, comment upon the following proposition: the professional is personal (or if you wish, the personal is the professional). In other words, how do professional social workers translate personal troubles experienced by people at the day to day level into public issues subject to social policy advocacy?

6.1. What role did collective action play in the expansion of the welfare state in the U.S.?
6.2. What are some of the changes that can result from engaging in collective action or participating in a social movement?
6.3. Throughout history, collective action has played a significant role in many social changes and social policy advances. Identify and describe some of these important social changes and social policy advances that have been influenced by collective action throughout America’s history.
6.4. What do feminists mean by the phrase “the personal is political?” Does this concept have applicability to the clients with whom you work?
6.5. What argument do Piven and Cloward make about the importance of social protest?
6.6. Piven and Cloward argue that the structure of power in society, which favors those at the top of the class pyramid, restricts the type of political action available to low-income people. Abramovitz, drawing on the work of Piven and Cloward, states, "Even when poor and working-class communities play by the rules, they cannot gain much political influence, given the political system's bias toward the haves over the have-nots. Therefore, poor people's movements—those with few resources and limited access to centers of power—must resort to the politics of disruption that defy political norms to achieve their ends." Do you agree? Why or why not?
6.7. Abramovitz points to three contradictions that have sparked much activism in the U.S. during the twentieth century. What are these contradictions?
6.8. Abramovitz describes a “paradigmatic shift” occurring during the 1960s and 1970s that dramatically changed the study and understanding of collective behavior. What precipitated this “paradigmatic shift”? In what ways were the new social theories different from the classical theories?
6.9. What is the “free-rider” concept? Why do you think this concept is important for social
workers to understand? Do you agree with economist Mancur Olson’s ideas about how to overcome the “free-rider” problem?

6.10. Abramovitz identifies four types of political opportunity structures that, depending upon the particular circumstances, may encourage or discourage people from using collective action to fight for social change. What are these opportunity structures?

6.11. Drawing on the four political opportunity structures identified by Abramovitz, how would you assess the climate for using collective action to fight for social change? Explain your thinking.

6.12. In what ways do the NSMs go about attempting to rescue ethnic, racial, gender and other identities from their distortion or erasure by the dominant culture?

6.13. Marxist theory suggests that the historic shift from feudalism to a market economy uprooted masses of people and ushered in economic arrangements favoring the owners of private property over others. Discuss how the new class structure unequally distributed power and control between those who owned the means of production versus those who were forced to sell their labor in exchange for wages. How did this distribution of power affect the working conditions of workers?

6.14. Discuss how the trade union movement evolved and advocated for better wages and better working conditions.

6.15. What role have poor and working-class women played in the women’s movement? What issues have they mobilized around?

6.16. Discuss the factors that fueled the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

6.17. In order for people to participate in social movements, the message of the movement must “make sense.” Discuss the role of “collective action frames” in winning supporters, accumulating resources, and legitimating the cause of a social movement.

**Session 8: Social Welfare History in the United States [before the New Deal]**

**Readings:** Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 7;

**Summary:** What is the meaning of social welfare history? How can the events of the past help us to understand social welfare policy today? This session (and the next session) and the assigned readings address these questions and identifies certain themes that have persisted throughout the history of American social welfare. By the end of the session, students will have an understanding of the power and indelible nature of these themes and how, though centuries old, they still shape our thinking about many current social welfare policies.

Question for all students: Based upon your reading of social welfare history in SWK 646/647, what historical events and/or social movements and/or historical figures are most interesting to you or inspiring to you personally?

7.1. As Americans, we know that every citizen is supposed to enjoy the right to vote. Yet an examination of American history indicates that this basic right of citizenship has not always been available to all. What historical and present day examples raise questions about the universality of voting rights?

7.2. Blau identifies five policy traditions brought to the United States by English colonists. What are these five traditions?

7.3. During colonial times, an emerging republicanism was the prevailing ideology. What is republicanism? Whose interests does republicanism represent?

7.4. Colonial society also developed an ideology for and about women. Describe this ideology. Whose interests were represented by this ideology?

7.5. Colonial society offered three primary means of relief for the poor. What were they?

7.6. Blau notes that during the period between 1783-1865, the growth of asylums and workhouses reflected a desire for a return to a more stable social order and revealed the anxiety Americans were feeling about the changes which were occurring during this period. What were some of the economic changes going on during this period? What were some of the political changes? What were some ideological changes? What issues did the social movements of this time address? What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.7. What were the two main issues involved in the debate about slavery? What were the implications of this debate for social welfare?

The Civil War to the Progressive Era (1865-1900)

7.8. The period between the Civil War and the Progressive Era, 1865-1900, was marked by many changes. What were some of the economic changes going on during this period? What were some of the political changes? What were some ideological changes? What issues did the social movements of this time address? What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

The Progressive Era to the New Deal (1900-1932)
7.9. The period between the Progressive Era and the New Deal, 1900-1932, is one marked by changes in all aspects of society. What were some of the economic changes during this period? What were some of the political changes? What were some ideological changes? What issues did the social movements of this time address? What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.10. Most accounts of the Progressive Era stress the importance of its reforms. What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.11. The stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930s prompted a near-collapse in many dimensions of American society. The New Deal policies of President Franklin Roosevelt sought to pull the country back from the brink of disaster and restore stability. One of the best ways to understand the policies enacted during this era is to examine these changes. What were they? Following the policy model, can you list the economic, political, and ideological changes of this period? What issues did the social movements of this time address? And what were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.12. Why were legislators from the South opposed to a single uniform standard of payment for recipients of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)?

7.13. The Cold War framed the period between 1946-1968. The major economic, political and ideological changes of the period, as well as social movements and social welfare history, must therefore be looked at within this context. What were some of the economic changes occurring during this period? What were some of the political changes? What were some ideological changes? What issues did the social movements of this time address? What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.14. Some social welfare historians of the civil rights movement have drawn a troubling conclusion about the use of violence. What is this conclusion and upon what is it based?

1969 to the Present

7.15. Unlike some other periods, the time from 1969 to the present has been characterized more by continuity than by change. Though this period has had both Republican and Democratic presidents, policy-makers from both parties believed that a reliance on the market should power the economy. From this framework, let’s examine the economic, political and ideological issues of the time, as well as the social movements and historical themes affecting social welfare. What were some of the economic changes going on during this period? What were some of the political changes? What were some ideological changes? What issues did the social movements of this time address? What were the historical themes of this era as they relate to the history of social welfare?

7.16. What is the essence of the economic argument used today by those who object to social welfare spending? What are their objections to this type of expenditure?

Session 9: Income Support: Program and Policies
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 8;

Summary: At the heart of the American welfare state are income assistance programs. Yet there is much misunderstanding among the populace not only about the range of income support programs, but also about why they were instituted and who benefits from them. This session and assigned readings is intended to give students a working understanding of the breadth of these programs and how they work, as well as to shatter the misconception that income support
programs only assist the poor. In addition, in this supporting this session and in the four that follow, students are given a chance to see how the application of the Blau/Abramovitz policy analysis model can be applied to pressing issues of public policy.

Key Concepts: income support programs, social security retirement, disability insurance, Supplemental Security Income, unemployment insurance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Workers’ Compensation, the Earned Income Tax Credit, General Assistance, experimental Individual Development Accounts, Basic Income Grant, co-entitlement, automatic disentitlement, unintended co-entitlement, COLAs

8: Income Support: Program and Policies: The triggers of social change: what led to the rise of income support programs? A description of their provision and benefits. The economic factors that have shaped their development. The political factors that have shaped their development. The ideological factors that shaped their development. The role of social movements in their development. Income support programs: the historical pattern.

For all students: On page 67, the principle of less eligibility was defined. Based upon your reading of this, is the principle of less eligibility still reflected in income support policy? How has this principle seemed to operate in the income support policy arena historically, and how have social movements and advocates sought to confront its implications?

8.1. The author identifies four different social change mechanisms that prepared the way for passage of income support programs. What are the mechanisms he identifies? How did they contribute to the passage of income support programs?

8.2. How are women shortchanged by the Social Security system? Why is this the case?

8.3. What is the difference between SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)?

8.4. The author points out that SSI embodies the contradictions of the welfare system in the United States. Explain.

8.5. In 2006, President George W. Bush finally succeeded in enacting a new TANF authorization. This authorization expands the work requirement from thirty to thirty-five hours a week and sets the participation rate at 50 percent for all families and 90 percent for those with two parents. Do you think these changes are good? Why or why not?

8.6. The Bush administration’s TANF reauthorization contains provisions which are designed to encourage single mothers receiving benefits to get married. What are the arguments made by those in favor of this policy? What are the arguments of those opposed? What do you think about it? What effect might this push for marriage have on your clients?

8.7. This stresses that most studies of TANF have found two distinct groups of recipients who have left welfare. Describe these two groups.

8.8. This stresses that most studies of TANF have found two distinct groups of recipients who have left welfare. Describe these two groups.

8.9. Looking at income support programs through the lens of economics, what do we learn? What are the economic functions of income support programs?

8.10. Looking at income support programs through the lens of politics, what do we learn? What are the political functions of income support programs? What political issues are embedded in
income support policies?

8.11. Looking at income support programs through the lens of ideology, what do we learn? What are the ideological underpinnings of income support programs? Who benefits from the reinforcement of these ideological ideals?

8.12. Looking at income support programs through the lens of social movements, what do we learn? What role have social movements played in the development of income support programs?

Session 10: Jobs and Job Training: Programs and Policies
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 9;

Summary: Closely tied to poverty, and residual in its orientation, employment policy has focused primarily on training the poor and unemployment. The Clinton Administration tried to consolidate the 125 programs for this population in a new Workforce Investment Act. But since the Act retains separate funding streams for most of the major programs, it may not be able to bring about the desired consolidation or improve upon what are, at best, the modest successes of job training. And while for the first time since 1981, there are some possibilities for public employment training, the United States, unlike most European countries, has never committed itself to a full employment policy.

Key Concepts: manufacturing sector, service sector, The Workforce Investment Act, adult employment services, dislocated workers, NAFTA-transitional Adjustment Assistance program, Job Corps, the National Farm Workers Job Program, Disabled Veteran’s Outreach Program, Comprehensive Employment Training Program (CETA), Welfare-to-Work Program

9: Jobs and Job Training: Programs and Policies: The context for employment policy. The triggers of social change: what led to the rise of federal job training programs? The Workforce Investment Act as the umbrella of U.S. job training programs. Public job creation programs. The economic factors that have shaped their development. The political factors that have shaped their development. The ideological factors that shaped their development. The role of social movements in their development. A history of job training programs.

For all students: William Quigley in his Ending Poverty as We Know It has proposed a constitutional amendment providing for the right to a job at a living wage. President-elect Barack Obama has proposed a massive stimulus plan that would create many jobs, especially related to infrastructure. This has lead one commentator to ask, “Where are the jobs for women?” Others wonder: where are the summer jobs for high school students and unemployed youth? Where are the jobs for people with disabilities? Please answer the following questions: Being sure to comment upon the implications of this, what kind of employment policies do you think are needed under the new administration?

9.1. Blau identifies five “triggers” that have brought about new federal job programs. What are these “triggers” and how have they worked to change employment policy?

9.2. The author argues that linking public job creation to the issues of welfare and poverty will probably guarantee the demise of this program. Do you agree? Why or why not?
9.3. Looking at employment and training programs through the lens of economics, what do we learn? What are the economic functions of employment and training programs?

9.4. Looking at employment and training programs through the lens of politics, what do we learn? What are the political functions of employment and training programs? What political issues are embedded in employment and training policies?

9.5. Looking at employment and training programs through the lens of ideology, what do we learn? What are the ideological underpinnings of employment and training programs? Who benefits from the reinforcement of these ideological ideals?

9.6. Looking at employment and training programs through the lens of social movements, what do we learn? What role have social movements played in the development of employment and training programs?

9.7. Looking at employment and training programs through the lens of history, what do we learn? What has been our historical experience with regard to the development of employment and training programs? Have there been particular “historical moments” that provided the right context for the development of these programs? Have there been different historical stages marking the development of employment and training programs?

Session II: Housing: Programs and Policies
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 10;

Summary: The previous sessions discussed programs that operate on the demand side of the economic equation. This session and its assigned readings address one of the major items on which people spend money: housing. Spiraling housing costs, gentrification, real estate speculation, high construction costs and the withdrawal of the federal government from the housing market have all contributed to an increase in homelessness, as well as a great inequity in home ownership between whites and people of color. In addition, these factors have created a dichotomy in the housing market where the poor and working poor are increasingly unable to afford decent and safe housing, while the middle and upper classes garner a disproportionate share of the available housing stock. This is intended to give students a comprehensive overview of U.S. housing policy and programs, as well as to describe the ways these policies and programs succeed and do not succeed in addressing the shortage of safe, affordable housing in this country. The also challenges students’ beliefs that the benefits of housing policy accrue mainly to the poor. At the conclusion of the , students are given a chance to see how the application of the policy analysis model described in this text can be used to analyze a problem such as homelessness, thereby helping them to gain a fuller understanding of how and why current housing policies have not adequately addressed this issue.

Key Concepts: housing vouchers, Section 8, tax expenditures, home ownership, national minimum housing wage, housing affordability gap, homelessness, the suburbs, Housing Act of 1937, Housing Act of 1949, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, housing bubble, urban renewal, gentrification, Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, SROs, Low Income Housing Credit, public housing authority, National Tenants Union

10: Housing: Programs and Policies: The context for housing policy
Homelessness. Race and housing policy. The suburbs and housing policy. The triggers of social
change: what led to the rise of federal housing programs? A description of the major federal housing programs. The economic factors that have shaped their development. The political factors that have shaped their development. The ideological factors that shaped their development. The role of social movements in their development. The federal housing programs: the historical pattern.

Question for all students: The text identifies a central issue with which we must grapple if we are to successfully address the housing shortage in the U.S. It is “How do we provide housing for the poor in a society that values housing for profit, when the poor, on their own, do not possess the resources to ensure a profit for the owners of this housing?” What thoughts and ideas do you have about this important issue?

10.1. The author identifies three principles around which American housing policy is developed. What are they?
10.2. The author identifies two “hidden” housing subsidies that disproportionately benefit the middle and upper classes. What are these subsidies? How do they disproportionately benefit the middle and upper classes?
10.3. The author states that home ownership rates mirror divisions of race and class. Explain.
10.4. The author states that looking at home ownership data alone paints a false picture of the U.S. housing market. What data does he cite to support his assertion?
10.5. Blau argues that public poverty (for example, homelessness) creates an ideological problem for the American socio-political-economic system. What does the author mean by this statement?
10.6. How has housing policy in the U.S. been entangled with the issue of race? What has been the impact of this entanglement on African-Americans and other people of color?
10.7. What “triggers” does the author identify as promoting change in housing policy? Are there different “triggers” when we talk about changing housing policy for the poor?
10.8. The author states that private poverty in the U.S. is usually acceptable as long as it is hidden. What evidence do you see which either supports or challenges the author’s view?
10.9. The author identifies urban renewal and gentrification as two triggers of change in housing policy. What is your view of these policies? Explain. In what ways have your clients been affected by these policies?
10.11 When we look at housing programs through the lens of economics, what do we learn? What economic functions do housing programs and policies serve?

Session 12: Health Care: Programs and Policies

Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 11;

Summary: In U.S. public policy, few issues generate more intense feelings than health care. Rising health care costs, ever-increasing insurance premiums, and the growing number of people unable to afford health care coverage have made this one of America’s most pressing public policy issues. The material in this session and in the assigned readings are designed to acquaint students with the key policy issues underlying the ongoing debate about how best to meet the healthcare needs of the American people.
Key Concepts: managed care, HMO, PPO, POS, rationing of care, Medicare, Medicare Part D, Medicaid, State Children’s Health Insurance Plan, health savings accounts, DRG, universal healthcare, single payer system, mental health parity, national health service

11: Health Care: Programs and Policies: Excellence & scarcity: the paradoxes of U.S. health care; The triggers of social change: what led to the rise of U.S. health care programs? Medicare, Medicaid, and the Child Health Insurance Program. The inadequacies of U.S. health care system: inequality, the uninsured, prescription drugs, mental health policy, and the lack of national health care. The economic factors that have shaped the development of health care policy. The political factors that have shaped its development. The ideological factors that shaped its development. The role of social movements in its development. What can we learn from the history of failed attempts at national health care reform?

Question for All Students: Do you think the U.S. should have a system of universal healthcare coverage? What are the arguments you would make in favor of a universal system of healthcare? What arguments would you make against a universal system of healthcare?

11.1. What factors contribute to the high cost of health care in the U.S.? How do you think high healthcare costs could be contained? How would you balance the issue of healthcare cost containment with the issue of adequate healthcare services for all?

11.2. Discuss the influences of urbanization and industrialization on the development of public policy as it relates to healthcare.

11.3. Blau states that the key question about managed care is whether it is rationing care for logical or self-interested motives. What do you think? What has been the experience of the clients with whom you work in accessing needed healthcare? What has been the experience of clients with regard to accessing quality healthcare?

11.4. The CEO of the Kaiser Health Plan has expressed the view that trying to use financial tools to change the delivery of healthcare doesn’t work and makes people mad. Blau argues that if managed care cannot solve the problems of the healthcare system, people will get mad and will fight back. What is your view of these arguments? Have we seen any examples of people “fighting back” against the managed care system?

11.5. Blau draws upon health policy literature and research to make the point that inequality kills irrespective of the riskier health behaviors in which some poor people engage. What points does he cite to support this argument? Do these arguments hold true for your clients? Give some examples from your practice.

Session 13: Food and Hunger: Programs and Policies
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 12;

Summary: This highlights a social problem in the United States that, on some levels, defies explanation: how, in a country where food is plentiful and cheap, can hunger be a problem? How, in a land of extraordinary abundance, can people go hungry? This lays out the dimensions of the problem of hunger in the United States, as well as its effects on physical and psychological health. It describes the different food entitlement programs and proposes a system of classification to help students identify the differences and similarities among them. The author
also helps students to understand some of the factors that set hunger apart from other social problems. He then explores whether these differences in the perception of hunger have led to the growth of a charitable food network that actually undermines the goal of feeding the poor. The conclusion of the offers students the opportunity to see how the application of the policy analysis model described in this text can be used to analyze the problem of hunger. In this process, the application of this model can help them to reach a more informed decision about where they stand in the debate over entitlements versus charity.

Key Concepts: hunger, potential hunger, food security, food insecurity, malnutrition, social costs, Food Stamps, WIC Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program for Children, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Emergency Food Assistance Program, the private food assistance network, Second Harvest

12: Food and Hunger: Programs and Policies: Defining hunger. Hunger: how widespread is it? The consequence of nutrient deficiencies. The triggers of social change: what led to the rise of federal food programs? Federal food programs: their provisions and benefits. The economic factors that have shaped their development. The political factors that have shaped their development. The ideological factors that shaped their development. The role of social movements in their development. Historical patterns in the development of food programs. Food programs: charity or entitlement?

Question for all students: When we look at programs designed to address hunger and food insufficiency through the lens of politics, what do we learn? What political functions do these programs and policies serve? What political issues are embedded in hunger policies?

Paragraph Questions

12.1. The author argues that hunger is different from other social problems. What do they mean?
12.2. Why should the fact that some people don’t get enough to eat matter as an issue of social policy?
12.3. When we look at programs designed to address hunger and food insufficiency through the lens of economics, what do we learn? What economic functions do these programs and policies serve?
12.4. When we look at programs designed to address hunger and food insufficiency through the lens of ideology, what do we learn? What are the ideological underpinnings of policies and programs that address hunger? Who benefits from the reinforcement of these ideological ideals?
12.5. When we look at programs designed to address hunger and food insufficiency through the lens of social movements, what do we learn? What role have social movements played in the development of hunger programs and policies?
12.6. When we look at programs designed to address hunger and food insufficiency through the lens of history, what do we learn? What has been our historical experience with regard to the development of programs to address hunger? Have there been particular “historical moments” that provided the right context for the development of these programs? Have there been different historical stages that mark the development of programs to address hunger and food
insufficiency?

Session 14: Integration and Conclusions: If You Want to Analyze a Policy
Readings: Blau/Abramovitz Chapter 13

Summary: In discussing this final, and your final integrative papers, we will summarize the central themes running through the primary Blau/Abramovitz text and discuss the central importance of advocacy for social change. Because students should have a much clearer understanding of the link between policy and practice, and because they now have a policy model to draw upon, they should feel much better equipped, not only to identify social problems, but also to advocate and fight for positive social changes.