

SOCIOLOGY 461

Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare

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Prerequisites: No

General Education: No

This course provides an introduction to the social work profession and to social welfare as a basic institution in American society. It emphasizes the unique mission of social work—to promote social and economic justice. The course will examine: How are social work and social welfare related to sociology? How are they relevant to contemporary social problems such as poverty and child abuse? How do social and political frameworks influence social welfare programs such as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and proposals for universal health insurance?

To enhance learning, this is a "service-learning" class, which includes a community service assignment. The students select one service-learning option, from a list of sites provided by the instructor. Students are encouraged to choose a site that introduces them to a population with which they are not familiar. Students are expected to contribute at least 15 hours of community service. In three structured Reflection Papers, students analyze their service learning experience, using concepts from the class lectures and readings.

Guest speakers provide an overview of social work in various fields of practice including: child protective services, social work in schools, medical social work, and social work in prisons.

The readings include case examples of social work intervention and a text with international comparisons of social policies such as universal health insurance. The course books will be ordered and available through North Lights Bookstore in Cotati.

The course is designed for students considering graduate education in social work, as well as students who will become informed members of the public, in a time when there is considerable debate about individual, family, and collective responsibilities.