Course Rationale and Significance

This course explores the nature of social planning and social development with a focus on Canada's cultural diversity and social justice issues within the context of globalization. It explicitly examines the newest approach to social planning – the use of ‘civil society’ and ‘social capital’ as key organizing concepts.

Some of the key questions include: What is social planning? What should it be? Who currently does it? Who should do it? How can it be done better? What is the role of social workers and related professionals in social planning processes? The contextual issues covered include theories about welfare state and the “post-industrial” and the ‘globalized’ economy, issues of race, ethnicity and gender, and how social problems and human needs get defined, addressed or ignored.
Social planning is usually defined as the process by which a group or community decides its goals and strategies relating to social issues, such as aspects of the quality of life and the circumstances of living in society. It focuses on social externalities, redistribution, and the equitable distribution of social benefits. This is not an activity limited to government, but includes activities of the private sector, social movements, professions and other organizations focused specifically on social objectives. Social planning is approached in a wide variety of ways due to different uses of the terms “social” and “planning.”

The course is divided into four parts. Part I examines theories, concepts and major contemporary issues. These sessions provide an analytic framework for the issues covered in the course. Part II and Part III review social planning practice. Part II is based on a critical reading of key literature on social planning from the 1930s to the present. We trace the evolution of how social planning has been defined over the course of recent decades. This exercise helps develop an improved assessment of what social planning should be, especially in view of contemporary trends in the welfare state.

Part III consists of analysis of case study examples of current Canadian social planning organizations with a national focus. We critically examine their mandate, agenda and recent publications to better understand the range of political perspectives and public policy controversies. Part IV concludes the course by reflecting more generally on all the theories, issues and practical problems associated with social planning practice.

### Learning Objectives

The aim of the course is to critically assess and better understand the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the major approaches to social planning, and to provide students with a thorough knowledge of the issues, debates and methods associated with social planning practice. Students will develop an improved understanding of: (1) the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the major approaches to social planning; and (2) the issues, debates and methods associated with social planning practice. The case studies of social planning activities provide an opportunity to review recent social planning practice.

### A Note for PhD Candidates

Doctoral students taking this course will meet with the instructor to negotiate an individual set of course requirements, so as to best meet their interests and educational objectives. In addition, the PhD students will have additional seminars focused on social theory and social planning research methods. The PhD number for this course is SWK 6205.

### Required Readings

There is no textbook. The specific readings for each session are identified in the detailed course outline. A photocopied reader will be available. The readings identified as ‘supplemental’ are optional.
### Course Requirements

1. **Readings & Classroom Participation** (10%). The quality of the course depends a great deal on the quality of discussion in the classroom. All students are expected to come to class fully prepared and ready to contribute to the discussion. Students are expected to complete the designated readings prior to class. The readings identified as supplemental are not included in the reader. They serve as a guide to related literature on the topic of the session.

2. **Two Short Papers** (40%). A short paper (maximum 1,000 words) is due on February 2 and March 9. These present analysis and conclusions on an assigned theme, based on the classroom discussion and the readings. The two assignments are attached.

3. **Case Study Presentation and Written Report** (50%). Students will review and assess an example of social planning practice as carried out by an organization, present their findings to the class (Part III of the course), and write up their findings (maximum 10 page report).

### Evaluation Criteria

“Grades are a measure of the performance of a student in individual courses. Each student shall be judged on the basis of how well he or she has command of the course materials.” from U of T School of Graduate Studies 1998-99 Calendar, p.26.

**A. Excellent.** Exceptional performance in which there is strong evidence of original thinking, good organization, capacity to analyze and synthesize; a superior grasp of the subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of a knowledge base derived from extensive reading of the literature.

**B. Good.** Good performance in which there is evidence of a grasp of the subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability and reasonable understanding of the relevant issues under examination; evidence of familiarity with the literature.

**FZ. Inadequate.** Inadequate performance in which there is evidence of a superficial and/or confused understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills, limited or irrelevant use of literature.

**+ / - High / Low Distinction.** Secondary distinctions are made within the A and B grade categories by using + and - to signify that the work is high or low within that letter grade.
Course Outline and Schedule

The course is divided into four parts. Part I (sessions 2, 3, 4 and 5) focus on history, theory and concepts. These sessions provide an analytic framework for the issues covered in the course. Part II and Part III review social planning practice. Part II (sessions 6,7 and 8) is based on a critical reading of key literature on social planning from the 1930s to the present whereas Part III (sessions 9 an 10) assess the activities and publications of several current social and economic planning organizations in Canada. Part IV (sessions 11 and 12) conclude the course by reflecting more generally on all the theories, issues and practical problems associated with social planning practice.

1. Introduction to the Course  (Jan 5)

   Part I. Introduction: History, Theory, Concepts

2. History: The Evolution of Community-based Social Planning Practice  (Jan 12)
3. Current Issues: Critical Appraisal of Selected Social Planning Reports  (Jan 19)
5. Theory: The “Social” and the “Economic”: Why Two Separate Domains? (Feb 2)
6. Concepts: 'Race,' Diversity and Discrimination  (Feb 9; no class on Feb 16))

   Part II. Social Planning Practice — Past and Present

7. Social Planning: What is It? What Should it Be? (1st of 3 sessions) (Feb 23)

   Part III. Case Studies: Current Social Planning Practice

10. Case Studies 1: 'Social Planning' Organizations in Canada  (Mar 16)

   Part IV. The Future: Local, Global

READING LIST

1. Introduction to the Course

PART 1. INTRODUCTION: HISTORY, THEORY, CONCEPTS

2. History: The Evolution of Community-based Social Planning Practice

How and why did social planning evolve? What do social planning organizations do? What are the key trends? What role can/should social workers play in social planning?


Supplemental Readings


3. **Current Issues: Critical Appraisal of Selected Social Planning Reports**

   In order to help make the link between theory/concepts and practice, this session will focus on a critical reading of recent reports from Canadian non-governmental social planning and social service agencies. What topics do they tend to focus on, from what perspective, and with what objectives?

   A. Draft Social Charter, 1992, drafted by a number of Canadian NGOs.

**ASSIGNMENT — Additional Reading**

   In addition to the documents in the reader which we will all discuss in class, each student will go to one of the social development agency websites listed below and select a document to review. These will be further discussed in class.

   - CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT -- [http://www.ccsd.ca/](http://www.ccsd.ca/)
   - ONTARIO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL -- [http://www.web.net/~osdc/](http://www.web.net/~osdc/)
   - COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF TORONTO -- [http://www.cspc.toronto.on.ca/](http://www.cspc.toronto.on.ca/)
4. Theory: Defining Key Concepts

We think and act on the basis of implicit understandings about the nature of our society and its major institutions. We need to be explicit about the key concepts that guide our practice if we hope to be effective. A fundamental political question relating to these key concepts/understandings is: Why does our society make a distinction between ‘the social’ and ‘the economic’? How, for example, is ‘social development’ different from ‘economic development’ and should there be a difference? We discuss six key interrelated concepts using the following readings as a starting point.


**Supplemental Readings**


5. **Theory: Building ‘Social Capital’ as Social Planning?**

“The widespread and interdisciplinary enthusiasm for social capital and civil society indicates the range of constituencies for whom narrowly construed economic models, especially the rational choice manifestation, provide an inadequate basis for understanding and analyzing social and political life.” – Edwards and Foley, 1998

“Organized civil society in the U.S. has never flourished apart from active government and inclusive democratic politics. Civic vitality has also depended on vibrant ties across classes and localities. If we want to repair civil society, we must first and foremost revitalize political democracy... Re-establishing local voluntary groups alone will not suffice.” – Skocpol, 1996

The concept of social capital within civil society has become one of the more popular exports from academic-based sociological theory into everyday language. Social capital is often defined as the invisible glue that holds society together: the social networks, the norms, and trust that enable groups of individuals to co-operate in pursuing solutions to shared problems or common objectives. Many distinguish two main dimensions of social capital: **social glue**, which refers to the degree to which people take part in group life; and **social bridges**, the links between groups. Harvard professor Robert Putnam’s famous metaphor of ‘bowling alone’ refers to his claim that the degree of “civic engagement” in the U.S. is in decline.

Even though Putnam’s claim and his definition of social capital are hotly disputed, there is a growing consensus that the concept is helpful in understanding society and in improving community development practice. It calls attention to the non-market aspects of social reality and constitutes a much-needed corrective to the narrow economic model of market-maximizing individuals. It recognizes that individuals and collectivities depend on a variety of resources capitalized in a variety of ways and contexts. The concept is being used by social planning agencies in Ontario.

What is ‘social capital’? How does it differ from other forms of capital: financial, cultural, human? How helpful is it as a conceptual framework for social planning? How do we ‘build’ social capital for social change and social justice?


**Supplemental Readings**


“An inclusive society would have room for all; it would not exclude or displace. A good society, be it public or private, must account for all its citizens. It cannot choose to make outcast or poor certain segments who, because of their race, sex, age, or other characteristics, are deemed less worthy. An inclusive society must be democratic and thus enable all to participate in it fully.” (Paul Davidoff, 1983)

Racialization: “the representational process whereby social significance is attached to certain biological (usually phenotypical) human features, on the basis of which those people possessing those characteristics are designated as a distinct social collectivity.” (Miles 1989:74)

Discrimination on numerous invidious grounds is part of the normal functioning of employment and housing markets and the education and social justice systems. Some progress has been made, but much remains to be achieved. What do we mean by ‘discrimination’? How does it manifest and maintain itself? How do we combat discrimination? What is the difference between ‘direct’ and ‘adverse affect’ discrimination?


Supplemental Readings


PART II. SOCIAL PLANNING PRACTICE — PAST AND PRESENT

7. Social Planning: What is It? What Should it Be? (1st of three sessions)

8. Social Planning … (2nd of three sessions)

9. Social Planning … (3rd of three sessions)

In these three sessions we read in chronological order some of the more classic discussions about what social planning practice is and what it ought to be. The aim here is to stimulate our own thinking on the issue and to become more aware of how context-bound each generation of thinkers/researchers is.


PART III. CASE STUDIES: CURRENT SOCIAL PLANNING PRACTICE


In these sessions we will discuss student analyses of public policy research and lobbying organizations that attempt to influence social and economic policy. These can be considered ‘social planning’ organizations in the sense that, from a variety of political/ideological perspectives they each attempt to influence the policy agenda and outcomes.

These organizations include, but are not limited to, the list below. The organizations examined must have as one of there purposes the objective of defining and influencing public policy issues relating to social and economic policy.

Local/Regional Canadian
- COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF TORONTO
- ONTARIO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL -- http://www.web.net/~osdc/
- SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

National Canadian
- BUSINESS COUNCIL ON NATIONAL ISSUES --
- CALADON INSTITUTE -- http://www.caledoninst.org/
- CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES (CCPA) -- http://www.policyalternatives.ca/
- CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CCSD) -- http://www.ccsd.ca/
- CANADIAN POLICY RESEARCH NETWORKS INC. -- http://www.cprn.org/
- C.D. HOWE INSTITUTE -- http://www.cdhowe.org/eng/
- FRASER INSTITUTE -- http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/
- INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON PUBLIC POLICY (IRPP) -- http://www.irpp.org/

Global
PART IV. THE FUTURE: LOCAL, GLOBAL


Supplemental Readings


