UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social Work Policy Practice

2627-1-F8702N029

Learning objectives

-To apply theoretical concepts useful to recngnize the role of social workers as policy implementers and policy makeers.

- To apply concepts, strategies and tools for social work policy practice

Contents

- Social Policy and Social Work, in the hisotry and in the present: An Overview
- The political role of social work
- Policy practice within an anti-oppressive framework
- Technocratic, managerialistic and care logics in social work
- Social workers as streel-level bureaucrats
- Politicizing and depoliticizing social work
- Conditions and strategies for social work policy practice

Detailed program

This course aims to build a space for critical reflection on possible frameworks and strategies to analyze and influence policies that impact on the quality of social work. On the one hand, social workers are asked to promote social change and social justice by working in alliance with people and trying to tackle the structural problems that affect their quality of life; on the other hand, the literature highlight a scarce confidence of several social workers as regard to their actual possibility of affecting policies. The problematic relationship between professional practice and policy in social work has been present for decades, but it seems to have worsened in recent times, in relation

to local and global social problems (poverty, migration, collective emergencies, etc.) and the ways in which international organizations and national and local governments address them, with the more recent prevalence of technocratic and neoliberal ideologies that promote processes of depoliticization.
against this backdrop, the aim of this course is twofold: a) to foster a critical reflection on social problems that emerge from the intersection of the local, national and international levels and their impact on the experience of citizens, and particularly the most ooppressed groups b) to apply concepts and tools social work policy practice , necessary to inform transformative action in services, in relation to what emerges from the interaction with people's life worlds.

Prerequisites

A consolidate knowledge of social work foundations and social work organizations.

Teaching methods

Teaching involves :

- 28 hours conducted in interactive in-presence mode;
- 21 hours conducted in interactive (also remotely), with activities to analyze case studies and carry out a project work on polocy parctice
  You can find a detailed guide for the projcet work in the E-learning platorm
  -5 hours o online lectures

Assessment methods

The final exam is carried out as an oral interview, with two possibilities among which students can choose:
mode 1: the discussion of a policy practice project in social work, related to the concepts discussed during classes (see slides) and covered in the texts.The policy practice project must be emailed at least one week before the oral examination (you can find a guide uploaded in E-learning). There are no intermediate tests.
mode2: an oral exam on the mandatory text listed below.

The final assessment considers: -the understanding and ability to apply theoretical concepts -the ability to critically analyze the intersection between policy making and social workers' practices -the acquisition of strategies and tools for policy practice -communication skills in writing and oral communication.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Mandatory books:
Guidi R.; Mordeglia S (2024) (a cura di). La policy practice degli assistenti sociali. .Angeli, Milano.
Sanfelici M (2024). Fondamenti del servizio sociale anti-oppressivo.Carocci.
Cummins L, Byers K.V., Pedrick L. (2023). Policy Practice for Social Workers. An Ethic of Care Approach. Routledge (parte 2)

Other suggested books,

Jansson B (2017). Becoming An Effective Policy Advocate (8th Edition). Cengage Learning.
Aviv, I., Gal, J., & Weiss-Gal, I. (2021). Social workers as street-level policy entrepreneurs. Public Administration, 99(3), 454–
468.
Feldman, G. (2020). Making the connection between theories of policy change and policy practice: A new conceptualization.
The British Journal of Social Work, 50(4), 1089–1106
Zacka, B. (2017). When the state meets the street. HarvardUniversity Press.
Colby, I. C. (2018). The handbook of policy practice. Oxford University Press.

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS