COURSE OUTLINE

SWK710 Advocacy and Leadership in Social Policy and Legal Contexts

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

BLENDED LEARNING

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course introduces you to the Australian social policy and legal landscape and how social work services and practice is shaped within this context. Social policy impacts on the welfare of a nation's citizens, through mechanisms for distributing society's resources. Social policy is underpinned by values, driven by political objectives and maintained by discursive practices. This course will provide a critical theoretical framework for evaluating historical and recent trends in social policy and its impact on people from various population groups.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Online learning materials Week 1 to Week 12	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – 10*2hrs F2F Tutorials/Workshops	2hrs	Week 1	10 times

1.3. Course Topics

This course will cover social policy topics related to: cycles, analysis, theoretical frameworks, legal contexts, contemporary issues, global perspectives, and advocacy and reform proposals.

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING * Australian Association of Social Workers
1	Explain how social policy influences inequality, the structure of Australian society and the well-being of citizens.	Knowledgeable	3, 5
2	Identify central issues in social policy development and analysis.	Ethical	3, 5
3	Apply a critical framework to analyse at least one area of social policy.	Creative and critical thinker	3, 5, 6
4	Communicate research through written and verbal modes.	Empowered	9
5	Be active learners, open to new knowledge, and actively engage with peers in classroom learning opportunities	Creative and critical thinker Engaged Collaboration	1, 9
6	Identify the complexities and discriminatory practices of social policies in relation to culture, identity and diversity.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical	2, 3, 4, 6

* Competencies by Professional Body

CODE	COMPETENCY
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS	
1	Practice Standard 1: AASW Code of Ethics
2	Practice Standard 2: Working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
3	Practice Standard 3: Human rights and social justice
4	Practice Standard 4: Culture, identity and intersectionality
5	Practice Standard 5: Critical thinking in practice
6	Practice Standard 6: Exercising professional judgement
9	Practice Standard 9: Professional growth

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the UniSC Glossary of terms for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will engage in graded online discussions from early in the semester. Formal feedback will be provided.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	10 Tutorials	Refer to Format	In Class
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	40%	Four x 500–600-word reflective posts linking readings/lecture content to practice and values; Plus, four x peer discussion responses (no less than 300 words per post)	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Discussion Board
All	3	Portfolio	Individual	50%	3,000–3,500-words	Week 10	Online ePortfolio Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Tutorial Attendance and Participation

GOAL:	AASW external accreditation requires mandatory attendance for skills-based tutorials. Students must attend workshops/tutorials and actively participate in all activities.
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	Total attendance will be recorded to meet external AASW accreditation requirements. Student participation and engagement in tutorial activities assessed based upon attendance and participation across all tutorials
CRITERIA:	**No.** — **Learning Outcome assessed** 1 Work effectively with others in a team environment — 2 3 5 2 Be an active learner, open to new and emerging knowledge, research, and evidence informing your practice — 4 5 3 Contribute your critical perspectives in interactions with peers in a positive and constructive manner — 4 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation

All - Assessment Task 2: Reflective Discussions

GOAL:	This assessment encourages students to engage in ongoing critical reflection that connects theoretical learning with professional values and social work practice. Through written reflections and peer discussions, students will demonstrate their ability to analyse policy, theory, evidence, and advocacy within contemporary social work contexts, while contributing to collaborative and values-informed professional dialogue.
PRODUCT:	Written Piece
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	Canvas Discussion Board The peer response submissions (4) will be completed in class to authenticate authorship and ensure academic integrity standards are being followed.
CRITERIA:	

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Integration of Theory, Readings & Practice	1 2 3 4 5 6
2	Critical Reflection on Practice and Values	1 2 3 4 5 6
3	Engagement with Peers and Collaborative Learning	3 4 5
4	Communication, Structure, and Academic Integrity	4 5

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy

All - Assessment Task 3: Capstone Project

GOAL:	The capstone project enables students to synthesise and apply their learning from across the unit by critically examining a contemporary social policy issue within its legal and practice context. Through integrated analysis, reflection, and evidence-informed reasoning, students demonstrate advanced understanding of the relationship between policy, values, theory, and social work practice, and articulate a professional stance that reflects ethical and socially just engagement with systems and reform.
PRODUCT:	Portfolio
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:	
FORMAT:	PebblePad

CRITERIA:

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Understanding of policy area, governance, and legislative framework	1 2 3 4 6
2	Application of critical frameworks to examine values, power, and discourse	1 2 3 4 6
3	Analyses how policy impacts social work roles, ethics, and service delivery	1 2 3 4 6
4	Develops a justified, evidence-informed reform or advocacy proposal	1 2 3 4 5 6
5	Synthesises learning and articulates evolving professional understanding	1 2 3 4 5 6
6	Quality of research, argumentation, writing, and presentation	1 2 3 4 5 6

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy

6.4. Assessment to competency mapping

PROGRAMME DELIVERY MODE	ASSESSMENT TYPE	TITLE	COMPETENCY	TEACHING METHODS
AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS (ASWEAS)				
All delivery modes	Activity Participation	Tutorial Attendance and Participation	5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			9	Taught, Practiced, Assessed

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the Library at no additional cost.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Carson, E & Kerr, L	2020	Australian Social Policy and the Human Services	3rd	Cambridge University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the online induction training for students, and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:
(a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
(b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:
(a) One day: deduct 5%;
(b) Two days: deduct 10%;
(c) Three days: deduct 20%;
(d) Four days: deduct 40%;
(e) Five days: deduct 60%;
(f) Six days: deduct 80%;
(g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:
Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The Student Charter sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- UniSC Student Central
- UniSC Adelaide Student Central