

SWK710 Advocacy and Leadership in Social Policy and Legal Contexts

School: School of Law and Society

2025 | Semester 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 usc.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 13	1hr	Week 1	13 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – 10*2hrs F2F Tutorials/Workshops	2hrs	Week 1	10 times

1.3. Course Topics

- Introduction to social work and social policy
- Engaging in social policy as social work students
- Current debates in social policy
- Knowledge, power, politics, ideology, discourse, and social policy
- Bachhi's 'What is the Problem Represented be'
- Analysing policy and writing policy brief

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	GRADUATE QUALITIES MAPPING	PROFESSIONAL STANDARD MAPPING *
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...	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

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 be undertake an online quiz test on week 4 and following this they will be provided needed and relevant feedbacks on their academic progress.

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	Quiz/zes	Individual	10%	A three-hour long online quiz	Week 4	Online Test (Quiz)
All	2	Oral	Individual	40%	10-15 minutes in-workshop presentation followed by 5 minutes Q&A	Refer to Format	In Class
All	3	Written Piece	Individual	40%	3000 words	Week 13	Online Submission
All	4	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	10 Tutorials	Refer to Format	In Class

All - Assessment Task 1: Quiz

GOAL:	The main goal of this task is to test students' knowledge and understanding of some basic concepts in social work and social policy.		
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes		
FORMAT:	Students will undertake a multiple-choice quiz that will consist of 20 questions based on SWK710 readings and online learning materials. The quiz will be time-bound. That is, once the students commence the quiz, they must finish within three hours. The quiz will be available on Week 4.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Correct identification of knowledge and understanding of basic concepts in social work and social policy	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:			

All - Assessment Task 2: Discourse Analysis presentation

GOAL:	To develop critical and discourse analysis skills in relation to a relevant social policy.		
PRODUCT:	Oral		
FORMAT:	<p>Policy decisions at various levels impact on the life chances, experiences and abilities of individuals, families, groups, and whole communities. As a social worker, your practice will be contextualised within a social policy and legal framework as it shapes the nature of services you provide to individuals, families, groups, and communities. Using an aspect of professional practice from your own experience either on field placement, or from your own human services related paid work, present a discourse analysis of a chosen policy to present in the tutorial between week 7 and week 10 that will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically analyse a relevant social policy and its legal context and discuss how it impacts on service users and on social work practices, and which employs an approach to critical discourse analysis based on Carol Bacchi's framework. 2. Analyse the legal context and the underlying policy agenda from a critical perspective, outlining what assumptions are evident about the nature of social relations or populations within society; 3. Outline how social policies and legal contexts have impacted on the relevant social service agency policies and practices impacting on service users; 4. Analyse how social workers could practice ethically and transcend the political agendas of governments or potentially oppressive social policies; 5. Propose at least two relevant and practical recommendations based on your discourse analysis <p>It is suggested that you select a social policy initiative relevant to your current social service work context, or your field education placement agency, however, this is not essential. Choose an area of social policy that interests you, or an area about which you have some prior knowledge. Several social policies will be placed on Canvas and you may also choose to analyse one of these, if you wish.</p>		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrate critical awareness of a relevant social policy and its legal context; its policy discourses and agendas and inherent assumptions; and its impacts on service users and work practices at an organisational level.	1 2 3 6
	2	Articulate how socialwork ethics can be drawn upon and demonstrated in practice that could transcend the political agendas of governments or potentially oppressive social policies.	1 2 3
	3	Advocate for at least two recommendations that could be made to the social policy that aligns with social work ethics and if implemented by government could potentially transcend oppressive conditions impacting on service users.	1 2 3
	4	Demonstrate high quality oral presentation skills, engaging the audience with compelling non-scripted information and respond effectively to questions from the audience.	4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 3: Social Policy Review Submission and Accompanying Strategy Proposal - collaborative/cooperative strategy proposal or conflict/campaign strategy proposal

GOAL:	To develop written skills in policy reform advocacy.		
PRODUCT:	Written Piece		
FORMAT:	This assessment piece is in two parts. Part A is a submission to a policy review process about the same social policy discussed in the previous assessment task. You will write a 3-4 page submission making a case for, and two specific recommendations about, how the social policy should be reformed, modified or expanded. Part B involves writing a 2-3 page accompanying strategy proposal to maximise the effectiveness of the submission (Part A) and considers the policy makers you are attempting to influence. The strategy proposal is to be viewed within the broader social policy context and policy cycle, and would, therefore, indicate either a collaborative/cooperative strategy, or a conflict/campaign strategy is appropriate for the chosen policy in the current policy cycle. A detailed document providing guidelines about the specifics required for these tasks (Parts A and B) will be provided to you at the commencement of the course.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Demonstrate comprehension of a critical approach to social policy analysis, by analysing a relevant social policy document as it impacts on service users and on social work practices (Part A).	1 2
	2	Make coherent & persuasive arguments about how the social policy should be reformed and articulate two practical, succinct & relevant recommendations about how the social policy can be reformed based on the arguments made (Part A).	2 3
	3	Write a detailed plan for an appropriate strategy to accompany Part A articulating how social work practice can transcend the political agendas of governments to better reflect social work values, ethics and objectives (Part B).	3
	4	Follow the Terms of Reference for the submission and cover all sections outlined in the Guidelines document for both Part A and Part B.	4
	5	Write with clarity (expression, correct grammar, spelling and punctuation), logically structured, coherently argued analysis, and appropriately supported by relevant published literature.	4
GENERIC SKILLS:			

All - Assessment Task 4: Tutorial Attendance and Participation

GOAL:	AASW external accreditation requires mandatory attendance for skills based tutorials. Students must attend weekly tutorials and actively participate in all tutorial activities.		
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation		
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:			

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
	Oral	Discourse Analysis presentation	1	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			3	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			6	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			9	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
	Quiz/zes	Quiz	3	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
	Written Piece	Social Policy Review Submission and Accompanying Strategy Proposal - collaborative/cooperative strategy proposal or conflict/campaign strategy proposal	1	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			3	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			5	Taught, Practiced, Assessed
			6	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

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Carol Lee Bacchi	2009	Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to be?	1st	Pearson

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. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. 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>

10.9. 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.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au