Introduction to Social Policy

Social Policy 201
Fall Quarter 2004
School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University

Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Instructor: Jerome Stermer
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Course Description: This course will introduce students to social policy through a general analysis of some of the major social welfare programs in the U.S. and an assessment of the underlying values that contributed to the evolution of these programs. In addition we will examine the processes by which social policies are developed, debated, adopted, administered and refined. A substantial portion of the course will be devoted to social welfare policies adopted to improve the lives of lower income Americans including social insurance and welfare. Students will explore the interaction of various policies and programs including housing assistance, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Food Stamps, child care subsidies, child support, Medicare and Medicaid. The course will include a broad overview of social policy issues that will likely continue to be the focus of national debate during the next decade and beyond. Each student will be given the opportunity to explore the complexities of a specific policy and develop skills to analyze, assess and offer recommendations for policy development and improvement.

Course Requirements:

Students will be expected to become familiar with the basic purposes and constructs of contemporary social policy.

In addition to the assigned readings and lectures, individual and group assignments will be given with detailed instructions and deadlines.

Each student is required to write a term paper (10 – 12 pages) on a topic of her or his choice. The topic must be selected and approved no later than October 19th. Term paper is due November 16.

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions.

There will be two essay exams. A mid-term exam will be taken in class. The final will be a take-home exam. Mid-term exam – October 26th. Final exam – December 7th - due by 7:00 pm.
Readings: * required


Useful Web Sites
Joint Center on Poverty Research
Urban Institute
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
National Governor’s Association
Children’s Defense Fund
Annie E. Casey Foundation – Kids Count
The Future of Children (Packard Foundation) futureofchildren.org
The Center for the Study of Social Policy
Center on Law and Social Policy

Course grading:
- Class participation, class presentations 30%
- Short essays, term paper 30%
- Mid-term exam 20%
- Final exam 20%

Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be sent as email attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/. If you need a copy of the brochure visit the SESP Student Affairs Office.