

Introduction to Social Policy

Social Policy 201
Fall 2010
School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
6:00 pm to 7:20 pm
Annenberg Hall, Room G32

Instructor: Marvin Cohen
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Teaching Assistant: Michael Barber
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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 contribute 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 designed to improve the lives of low income Americans, including Social Security, welfare, education and healthcare programs. 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, public education as well as Medicare, Medicaid and the Obama Administration's health care legislation. 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, a number of shorter individual and group assignments will be given with detailed instructions and deadlines.

Each student is required to write a **term paper** (10 – 14 pages in length) on a topic of her or his choice. The topic must be proposed no later than **September 30th**, and the paper is due **November 9th**.

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 21st

Final exam – due by 5:00 p.m. on December 6th

Class Participation will be judged based on your overall engagement in the discussions and group activities. Students are expected to come to class prepared by reading and reflecting on the assigned materials. I encourage you to volunteer your thoughts and to interact both with me, our teaching assistant, Mike Barber and with your classmates. Because social policy decisions in American life are always the result of collective thinking and give and take, we will endeavor, in some small way, to reflect that process in our class. In assessing the group assignments I will consider your level of engagement and creativity to be as important as the substance of your ideas.

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 that are conveyed as email attachments must also be 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.

REQUIRED READINGS

What Government Can Do: Dealing with Poverty and Inequality. 2000. Benjamin I. Page and James R. Simmons. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare. 2004. Jason DeParle. New York, Viking.

Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap. 2004. Richard Rothstein. Washington, D.C., Economic Policy Institute.

Building a Real "Ownership Society." 2005. J. Larry Brown, Robert Kuttner, and Thomas M. Shapiro. New York, The Century Foundation Press. On-line.

The Lost Art of Democratic Narrative: Story Time. Robert B. Reich March 28, 2005. On-line.

The ITEP Guide to Fair State and Local Taxes: A Primer on Fair and Adequate Taxation – and How to Achieve it in Your State. 2005. Casey Cabalquinto et al. Washington, D. C. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. This document will be handed out in class. Also on line.

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America. 2001. Barbara Ehrenreich. New York, New York, Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Her Most Difficult Call: When is a mother so troubled, or troubling, that a welfare worker must take her kids from her? Daniel Bergner. New York Times Sunday Magazine July 23, 2006. Search by title and author on Google.

The Value and Role of Communities in Caring for Foster Children. Jerome Stermer in 40 Years of Stewardship...Where are We Headed? A report on the 40th Anniversary Symposium of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, December 2004.

The Obama Administration's Options for Health Care Cost Control: Hope Versus Reality, Theodore Marmor, Jonathan Oberlander and Joseph White, in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol 150, No 7, pp. 485 – 489, April 2009

The Health Bill Explained at Last, Jonathan Oberlander and Theodore Marmor, in *The New York Review of Books*, August 19, 2010

Swamp Nurse: What's the best hope for the first child of a poor mother? Katherine Boo. *The New Yorker*. February 6, 2006. Found on the website of the New America Foundation listed under the writings of senior fellow, Katherine Boo.

The Reverse Commute, Alyssa Katz, in *The American Prospect*, July 15, 2010

Global Migration: A World Ever More on the Move, in *The New York Times, Week in Review*, Jun 26, 2010

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. 1995 (2nd Edition). John W. Kingdon. New York, Longman – Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda for Fighting Poverty. 1997. Rebecca M. Blank. Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

“They Take Our Jobs” and 20 other myths about immigration 2007. Aviva Chomsky. Boston, Beacon Press.

The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time. 2005. Jeffrey D. Sachs. New York, The Penguin Press.

Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise. 2005. Lynn A. Karoly, M. Rebecca Kilburn and Jill S. Cannon. Santa Monica, California. Rand Corporation.

Fads, Fallacies and Foolishness in Medical Care Management and Policy. 2007. T. R. Marmor, editor. New Jersey, World Scientific

From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. 2000. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, Editors. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C. National Academy Press.

The Healing of America: A global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care. 2009. T. R. Reid. New York. The Penguin Press

The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. 1987. William Julius Wilson. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

There Are No Children Here. 1991. Alex Kotlowitz. New York, Doubleday.

A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League. 1998. Ron Suskind. New York, Broadway Books.

A Necessary Evil: A History of American Distrust of Government. 1999. Garry Wills. New York, Simon and Schuster.

The Working Poor: Invisible in America. 2005. David K. Shipler. New York, Vintage.

The Conscience of a Liberal. 2007. Paul Krugman. New York, W.W. Norton and Company

It Takes a Nation: A New Agenda For Fighting Poverty, 1997, Rebecca M. Blank, Princeton University Press, New Jersey

The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger, 2009, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, Bloomsbury Press, New York

The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More Than Ever. 2004. Cass R. Sunstein. New York, Basic Books.

Higher Ground: New Hope for the Working Poor and Their Children. 2007. Greg J. Duncan, Aletha C. Huston and Thomas S. Weisner. New York, N.Y., Russell Sage Foundation.

The State of Working America 2006/2007. Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein and Sylvia Allegretto. Economic Policy Institute. Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press.

The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America. 2005. Johnathan Kozol. Crown.

The Death and Life of the Great American School System, 2010, Diane Ravitch, Basic Books, New York

Saving Social Security: A Balanced Approach. 2004. Peter A. Diamond and Peter R. Orszag. Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution Press.

The Marriage Cure: Is wedlock really a way out of poverty? The New Yorker, August 18, 2003. Found on the website of the New America Foundation listed under the writings of senior fellow, Katherine Boo.

Social Security: The Phony Crisis. 1999. Dean Baker and Mark Weisbrot. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Racial Inequality and the Black Ghetto in Poverty & Race, November/December 2004, Alexander Polikoff

Fads, Fallacies and Foolishness in Medical Care Management and Policy, 2007, T. R. Marmor, World Scientific Publications, New Jersey

Useful Web Sites

Annie E. Casey Foundation – Kids Count
Berkley Media Studies
Brookings Institution
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Center on Law and Social Policy
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Century Foundation
Chicago Metropolis 2020
Child Trends
Children’s Defense Fund
Families USA
Future of Children (Packard Foundation) [future of children.org](http://futureofchildren.org)
Heritage Foundation
Institute for Policy Research
Joint Center on Poverty Research
Juvenile Justice Initiative
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governor’s Association
National Institute for Early Education Research
Pre-K Now
Promising Practices Network (Rand Corporation)
Urban Institute
Voices for America’s Children
Voices for Illinois Children

Course grading:

Note: Assuming that a student fully participates in all aspects of this course, the student’s final grade will generally be reflective of his/her best efforts, rather than premised on an uncompromising, mathematical formula. In this spirit, the following depiction of class activities can be relied upon as a rough estimate of how final grades will be determined.

Class participation, group assignments, and class presentations	20%
Short assignments	10%
Term Paper	30%
Mid-term exam	20%
Final exam	20%

**Fall Quarter 2010
Social Policy 201**

Class Topics and Reading Assignments

- Sept. 21 Class 1
Introduction
Course overview, Goals and Expectations
Brainstorming Assignment due next class
- Sept. 23 Class 2
Low Income Work
Ehrenreich
Brainstorming Assignment due today
Group Assignment due October 5
Term Paper Assignment: Topic due September 30 – Paper due November 9
- Sept. 28 Class 3
Purposes of Government, Definition of Social Policy
Page & Simmons, chapters 1-3
Data assignment due next class
- Sept. 30 Class 4
Data, The Policy Cycle, and “framing” messages
The Lost Art of Democratic Narrative by Robert B. Reich
Data Assignment due today
Term paper topic due today
- Oct. 5 Class 5
Group presentations
Newspaper Assignment due October 12
- Oct. 7 Class 6
Group presentations
- Oct. 12 Class 7
Social Insurance & The Ownership Society
Page & Simmons, chapter 4
Brown et. al. Building a Real “Ownership Society”
Newspaper Assignment due today
- Oct. 14 Class 8
Health Care Policy
Page & Simmons, chapter 8 pp. 269 - 273
Oberlander et al, The Health Bill Explained at Last
Marmor et al, The Obama Administration’s Options for Health Care Cost Control

- Oct. 19 Class 9
Federal Poverty Level
The Mismeasure of Poverty
Review for Mid Term
- Oct. 21 Class 10
Mid Term - in class
- Oct. 26 Class 11
Early Care and Education, Home Visiting and Child Care
Boo Swamp Nurse
Science, Policy, and the Young Developing Child: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do. by Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D.
Education Assignment – due next class
- Oct. 28 Class 12
Education
Rothstein
Page & Simmons, chapter 6
Education Assignment due today
- Nov. 2 Class 13
Housing & Economic Development
The Metropolis Plan 2020
Page & Simmons, chapter 8 pp. 259 – 269
The Reverse Commute by Alyssa Katz
- Nov. 4 Class 14
Fair Taxes and the Earned Income Tax Credit
Page & Simmons, chapter 5
ITEP Guide
- Nov. 9 Class 15
Urban Social Policy
Term Paper due today
- Nov. 11 Class 16
Welfare Reform
Page & Simmons, chapter 8 pp. 247 – 259 & 274 - 287
DeParle
Child Welfare Assignment - due next class

- Nov. 16 Class 17
Child Welfare
Bergner Her Most Difficult Call
Stermer The Value and Role of Communities in Caring for Foster Children
Child Welfare Assignment due today
- Nov. 18 Class 18
Child Support
In Everybody's Best Interests: Why Reforming Child Support Distribution Makes Sense for Government and Families, by Vicki Turetsky.
The Child Support Program: An Investment That Works, by Vicki Turetsky.
- Nov. 23 Class 19
Immigration
The Candidate Packet
Global Migration: A World Ever More on the Move by Jason DeParle
- Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov. 30 Class 20
The Role of Advocacy Groups
Raising Young Children To The Top Of The Policy Agenda: Lessons from Illinois
- Dec. 2 Class 21
Course Review
Take-home final exam distributed
- Dec. 6 **Final Exam due by 5:00 pm**