

PPPE 6340/SOC 6340 Domestic Social Policy

Fall 2016
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Domestic Social Policy examines governmental and nongovernmental programs, policies, and institutions dealing with individuals and families who do not function self-sufficiently within the American market economy. Beneficiaries of such programs include children and youth, the elderly, families headed by unemployed or under-employed parents, and people with physical and mental disabilities. By the end of the course, students should understand 1) the historical and political economy context for American domestic social policy; 2) the nature, causes, and consequences of poverty in the U.S.; and 3) the context, implications, and current policy debates in several key social policy areas.

We will begin with a conceptual and historical overview of how social policy in the United States reflects political economy, culture, demographic trends, and social and political institutions. We will continue with an examination of poverty, including its various definitions and differing views on its causes and consequences, and the range of public policy responses to poverty in the United States. The remainder of the course will examine a series of current American social policy reform issues on topics including cash assistance (welfare); education; health care; housing, homelessness, and urban development; and retirement. The class will be run as a seminar, with an emphasis on group discussion of assigned readings and current issues in social policy.

Course requirements include: weekly essays on assigned course readings (40% of the total course grade); a policy brief comparing positions of the major political candidates on an issue in domestic social policy (20%); and a policy analysis research paper (40%). Each student will be responsible for submitting a brief essay each week summarizing that week's assigned reading. The comparative analysis will have students summarize and compare the domestic social policy positions of the two major presidential candidates in the 2016 election. The policy analysis research paper will involve analyzing a significant domestic policy issue to be selected in consultation with the instructor. (The paper may focus on the domestic policy of a nation other than the United States.) Guidelines for the assignments will be distributed in class and posted on eLearning. Each student also will be expected to give a class presentation on her/his policy analysis paper during the last few weeks of class.

Required readings include four required texts and some web-based material on current social policy issues to be posted on eLearning. The books are:

Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (eds), *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*, Russell Sage Foundation, 2009. ISBN 9780871543103.

Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place and the History of an Idea*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016. ISBN 9780374161804.

Sharon Hays, *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*, Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 9780195176018.

Isabel V. Sawhill, *Generation Unbound: Drifting Into Sex and Marriage*, Brookings Institution Press, 2014. ISBN 9780815726357.

Course Outline (subject to revisions announced in class)

- August 23 Introduction to the Course
- August 30 Historical Overview of Social Policy
Reading: Scotch, “Social Policy 1945-1968” (eLearning)
- September 6 Poverty Definitions and Policy Responses
Reading: Cancian & Danziger, chapters 1, 2, 14
- September 13 Structural and Demographic Trends
Reading: Cancian & Danziger, chapters 3, 4, 5
- September 20 Mobility
Reading: Cancian & Danziger chapters 6, 7
- September 27 Marriage and Social Policy
Reading: Sawhill, all
- October 4 Cash Assistance and Family Policies
TOPIC STATEMENT DUE
Reading: Cancian & Danziger, chapter 8, 9
- October 11 Family, Gender, and Work
Reading: Hays, all
- October 18 Education and Poverty
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Reading: Cancian & Danziger chapter 10
- October 25 Health, Health Care, and Poverty
Reading: Cancian & Danziger, chapter 12
- November 1 Urban Policy
Reading: Duneier, all
- November 8 Domestic Social Policy in the 2016 Presidential Election/Student Presentations
COMPARATIVE POLICY BRIEFS DUE
- November 15 Housing and Homelessness/ Student Presentations
Reading: Gladwell, “Million Dollar Murray” (eLearning)
- November 22 Fall Break – No Class Meeting
- November 29 Social Security/Student Presentations
Reading: eLearning TBA
- December 6 Medicare/Student Presentations
Reading: eLearning TBA

University Policies

Information on university policies related to this and other UT Dallas classes may be found at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.