**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL POLICY**

Social Policy 201  
Winter 2015  
School of Education and Social Policy  
Northwestern University

**Instructor:** Marvin R. Cohen  
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**Teaching Assistant:** Alexis Johnson  
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**Reader:** Lauren Lowenstein Bauer  
*LaurenBauer@u.northwestern.edu*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
This course will introduce students to social policy through a broad overview of some of the major social welfare, community development and criminal justice programs in the U.S. coupled with an assessment of the underlying values that contribute to their evolution. A substantial portion of the course will be devoted to policies designed to realize our national aspiration to secure equal opportunity for all Americans as well as to moderate what may be deemed unacceptable inequalities of wealth. Students will explore the interaction of various policies and programs including Social Security, welfare reform, taxation, child care subsidies, early childhood education, criminal justice, public education, as well as Medicare, Medicaid, the Obama Administration’s Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 as well as the nation’s current drug policies. Each student will be given the opportunity to delve more deeply into the complexities of a specific policy of his/her choice, and will in the process develop skills to analyze and offer recommendations for policy enhancement.

**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 **January 15th**, and the paper is due **February 26th**.

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 (in class): February 5th**

**Final exam (take home): March 16th (due by 5:00pm)**
**CLASS PARTICIPATION:**
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 in advance.** I encourage you to volunteer your thoughts and to interact both with me, our teaching assistant, Alexis Johnson, our reader, Lauren Bauer, 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.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**
Students in this course are required 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 submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: [http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html).

**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%

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**
Any student with a disability requesting accommodations must register with Services for Students with Disabilities (ssd@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and request an SSD accommodation notification for his/her professor, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

1. **Books:**


2. Articles, Excerpts, Pamphlets, etc:


The Case for Reparations, Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic, June 2014, pp.54 - 71


The Metropolis Plan: Choices For The Chicago Region, Chicago Metropolis 2020 http://metropolisplan.org/main.htm

**Science, Policy, And The Young Developing Child: Closing The Gap Between What We Know And What We Do**, Jack P. Shonkoff, MD, The Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2004.

**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 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.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


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.


USEFUL WEB SITES

Annie E. Casey Foundation – Kids Count….  http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT
Brookings Institution….  http://www.brookings.edu
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities….  http://www.cbpp.org
Center on Law and Social Policy….  http://www.clasp.org
Center for the Study of Social Policy….  http://www.cssp.org
Century Foundation….  http://tcf.org
Child Trends….  http://www.childtrends.org
Children’s Defense Fund….  http://www.childrensdefense.org
Families USA….  http://www.familiesusa.org
Future of Children (Packard Foundation)….  http://futureofchildren.org
Heritage Foundation….  http://www.heritage.org
Institute for Policy Research (Northwestern University)….  http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu
Joint Center on Poverty Research….  http://www.jcpr.org
Juvenile Justice Initiative….  http://jjustice.org
Metropolis Strategies….  http://www.metropolisstrategies.org
National Conference of State Legislatures….  http://www.ncsl.org
National Governor’s Association….  http://www.nga.org
National Institute for Early Education Research (Rutgers)….  http://nieer.org
Promising Practices Network (Rand Corporation)….  http://www.promisingpractices.net
Urban Institute….  http://www.urban.org
Voices for America’s Children….  http://www.voices.org
Voices for Illinois Children….  http://www.voices4kids.org
FALL QUARTER 2014
SOCIAL POLICY 201

Class Topics and Reading Assignments

Jan 6
Class 1
Introduction
Course overview, Goals and Expectations
Stiglitz, Inequality Is Not Inevitable
Brainstorming Assignment due next class

Jan 8
Class 2
Low Income Work
Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed (Introduction, Chapter One, Evaluation, & Afterward)
Irwin, Growth Has Been Good For Decades. So Why Hasn’t Poverty Declined?
Putnam, Crumbling American Dreams
Brainstorming Assignment due today
Group Assignment due January 20th
Term Paper Assignment: Topic due January 15th – Paper due February 26th

Jan 13
Class 3
The Purposes of Government & The Function of Social Policy
Page & Simmons, chapters 1-3

Jan 15
Class 4
Social Policy, Perspective and The Art of “Framing” Messages
Reich, The Lost Art of Democratic Narrative
Term paper topic due today

Jan 20
Class 5
Group presentations
Newspaper Assignment due January 27th

Jan 22
Class 6
Group presentations

Jan 27
Class 7
Social Insurance
Page & Simmons, chapter 4
Marmor et al, “Social Insurance,” chapters 3 (pp. 34 – 42), 4 (pp. 47 – 59), 6, 8, 9, 10 & 12 (pp. 216 – 227)
Newspaper Assignment due today

Jan 29
Class 8
Health Care Policy
Page & Simmons, chapter 8 pp. 269 - 273
Marmor et al, Social Insurance, chapters 7 & 12 (pp. 227 – 238)
Feb 3  
Class 9  
Federal Poverty Level  
*The Mismeasure of Poverty*  
Marmor et al, *Social Insurance*, chapter 5 (pp. 74 – 76)  
Review for Mid Term

Feb 5  
Class 10  
**Mid Term** - in class

Feb 10  
Class 11  
Early Care and Education, Home Visiting and Child Care  
Boo, *Swamp Nurse*  
Shonkoff, *Science, Policy, and the Young Developing Child: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do.*  
**Education Assignment** – due next class

Feb 12  
Class 12  
Education  
Rothstein, *Class and Schools*  
*Page & Simmons*, chapter 6  
**Education Assignment due today**

Feb 17  
Class 13  
Regional Development  
*The Metropolis Plan 2020*  
*Page & Simmons*, chapter 8 pp. 259 – 269  
Coates, *The Case for Reparations*

Feb 19  
Class 14  
Fair Taxes and the Earned Income Credit  
*Page & Simmons*, chapter 5  
**ITEP Guide**

Feb 24  
Class 15  
Welfare Reform  
*Page & Simmons*, chapter 8 pp. 247 – 259 & 274 - 287  
DeParle, *American Dream*, Part III & Epilogue

Feb 26  
Class 16  
Urban Social Policy  
**Term Paper due today**

March 3  
Class 17  
Mass Incarceration as Social Policy  
*Alexander, The New Jim Crow*, Introduction, Chapters. 1 — 4  
**Child Welfare Assignment - due next class**
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Class 18</td>
<td>Child Welfare</td>
<td><em>Bergner, Her Most Difficult Call</em></td>
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<td><em>Stermer, The Value and Role of Communities in Caring for Foster Children</em></td>
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<td>Child Welfare Assignment due today</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Class 19</td>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td><em>Turetsky, In Everybody’s Best Interests: Why Reforming Child Support Distribution Makes Sense for Government and Families</em></td>
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<td><em>Turetsky, The Child Support Program: An Investment That Works</em></td>
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<td>March 12</td>
<td>Class 20</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td><em>The Candidate Packet</em></td>
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<td><em>DeParle, Global Migration: A World Ever More on the Move</em></td>
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<td>Take-home final exam distributed</td>
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<td>March 16</td>
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