

**University of Wisconsin - Madison  
School of Social Work**

**Social Work 950, Ph.D. Proseminar in Comparative Family Policy  
(Also Public Affairs 974-02)  
Fall 2008 Syllabus**

Wednesday 9-11:30, 110 Social Work

Professor: Dan Meyer

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Office hours: Tuesday 8:30-9-30, Social Work, and by appointment

## **I. Description**

This seminar focuses on family policy, broadly defined, with an international comparative emphasis. It fulfills a social policy seminar requirement for the PhD in social welfare, is cross-listed with Public Affairs, and is open to advanced MSW students and interested graduate students from other departments. The focus is on policy research and advanced policy analysis. No previous coursework is explicitly required, although to take maximum advantage of the course, a student should have some introductory background in social policy analysis. Moreover, most of the readings will employ a neoclassical microeconomic theory and use quantitative methods, so familiarity with both of these would be useful.

## **II. Objectives and Content**

The following objectives for this course are consistent with all Proseminars in Social Policy in the Social Welfare program:

1. to gain understanding of selected U.S. social policies and policy issues
2. to increase students' ability to critically analyze social welfare policies and the effects of various policies
3. to improve fluency in writing about and discussing social welfare policy issues and the substantive and methodological issues involved in related research
4. to assist the student in identifying topics to pursue for their own future research and/or policy related work;

In addition, the following objectives are specific to this proseminar:

1. to increase understanding of the social policies of other countries
2. to increase students' knowledge of methodological problems and issues faced in comparative policy research

The course provides a selective survey of comparative family policy. Family policy is defined broadly: we will cover traditional areas including child care, income support for children, family leave, divorce/paternity, etc., as well as more general social policies on income support for those unemployed and for elders, policy domains that clearly affect family functioning. Some of the topics covered will depend on student interests. While many of the readings are focused on developed countries (primarily Anglo countries and Europe), the intent is to learn about policy approaches around the world. As a graduate-level seminar, students are partners in the

educational journey, so the course content after the first 6 weeks may change somewhat depending on the interests and skill levels of the students involved.

### III. Texts and reading materials

Required readings include the following 5 books, all available at University bookstore:

Gosta Esping-Andersen. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers. 2003. *Families that Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Robert Holzmann and Richard Hinz. 2005. *Old Age Income Support in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Isabella Aboderin. 2006. *Intergenerational Support and Old Age in Africa*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Wayne Vroman and Vera Brusentsev. 2005. *Unemployment Compensation throughout the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Most other materials are available on the web. In addition, there will be a packet of materials available at Bob's Copy Shop, 1401 University Avenue.

*Please note that the list of required readings for classes 7 through 11 is tentative and may be changed.*

### IV. Assignments and evaluation of student outcomes

Grades: 35% final paper; 25% structuring and leading class session; 20% critiques of readings; 20% class participation. This is a graduate seminar; the expectation is that the seminar will provide a collaborative learning environment. Students consistently completing the assignments at the expected graduate level will receive a grade of AB. Students completing outstanding assignments will receive an A. Students generally completing assignments, with some but not all meeting graduate-level standards will receive a B. Academic honesty is a central requirement for graduate study. Please review the School of Social Work guidelines on plagiarism. If a student intentionally misrepresents another's work as their own, the student will receive no credit for the assignment and a final semester grade no higher than a C.

Final Paper: The final product will be a 20-30 page comparative policy analysis paper that compares an aspect of family policy in at least three countries. (Example: family planning policies in the US, China, and Japan.) The paper should include a discussion of the social problem, a description of current policy approaches, and an evaluation of current policy approaches. If a student prefers, it may be possible to submit an empirical research paper instead of the policy analysis paper; see instructor for more information. A proposal for a policy area and the countries to be studied is due in class **September 17**. An outline is required by

noon, **October 20**. The paper is due at 5 p.m., **December 16**. Turning in a paper after this date will probably cause you to receive an incomplete. Papers may be turned in without grade penalty until noon, **January 5** (papers turned in after January 5 will accrue significant penalties).

Structuring and Leading Class Session: Each student will be responsible for leading a portion or a full class session, including selecting readings, presenting material, and leading discussion. The presentation will be on the same topic as the policy analysis and needs to review policies in at least 3 countries. If two individuals are working in the same policy area, with instructor approval they can co-lead a collaborative session, though the paper is required to represent individual work.

Critiques of Readings: 9 critiques focusing on the weekly readings are due at the beginning of class each week. (The student will select the class periods in which she/he will not turn in a paper). I will grade six of these (graded as outstanding, meets expectations, or below expectations. Maximum length: 1.5 single-spaced pages. Required format: (a) summary of the author's major arguments (maximum one-half page); (b) critical appraisal of the central argument. If there is more than one required reading the week, the summary of each reading will be quite short (total of one-half page for all readings put together), and the critique can be either of individual readings or the package as a whole.

Class Participation: Because much of the learning occurs during the class time, students are required to attend every class or to receive approval in advance for not attending. In addition, students are expected to have carefully and critically read all assigned readings, and to be prepared to discuss them.

## **V. Expectations of Students and Instructor**

Students are expected to:

- attend class each session (or receive approval in advance for non-attendance), actively participate in the in-class discussions. (If you cannot attend class, you are responsible for knowing what occurred and for getting any handouts).
- carefully and critically read all required readings before coming to class,
- complete all assignments by the due dates and times (thus you are expected to plan your life so that you can make the required deadlines in the course).
- inform the instructor during the first week of the semester of any special accommodations needed for meeting class expectations (as approved by the McBurney Center);
- be respectful of other class members--a diversity of views and opinions may be articulated during discussions.

The instructor is expected to:

- assure that course objectives are being met;
- hold regular office hours and be available to students to answer questions through email during business hours;
- give reasonable guidance on preparing for assignments; give prompt feedback on assignments;
- be open to discussing concerns about the course.

## VI. Specific course content and required readings

### Week 1, Sept 3: Overview of course and social policy framework

Optional: Ralph Dolgoff and Donald Feldstein. 2007. "Examining a Social Welfare Program within the Context of Social Justice: Structural Components, Alternative Program Characteristics, and Evaluation." Chapter 7 in *Understanding Social Welfare: A Search for Social Justice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### Week 2, Sept 10: Family change: What is the context for family policy?

U.N. Division for Social Policy and Development Programme on the Family. 2003-04. "Major Trends Affecting Families: A Background Document, Introduction"  
<http://www0.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtintro.pdf>.

Robert Cliquet. 2003-04. "Major Trends Affecting Families in the New Millennium: Western Europe and North America." New York: United Nations.  
<http://www0.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtcliquet.pdf>

You will also be responsible for 2-3 other articles from this UN project representing other regions/country groups. Specific assignment to be made in class.

### Week 3, Sept 17: Social policy regimes: a modern classic

Gosta Esping-Andersen. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

### PROPOSAL FOR POLICY TOPIC DUE

### Week 4, Sept 24: Social policy approaches: critiques of regimes, an alternative developmentalist perspective, and family policy in the developing countries. Guest: Karl Johnson, PhD Student

Wil Arts and John Gelissen. 2002. "Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism or More? A State-of-the-art Report." *Journal of European Social Policy*, 12(2):137-58.

Christoffer Green-Pedersen. 2002). "The Dependent variable Problem within the Study of Welfare State Retrenchment: Defining the Problem and Looking for Solutions." University of Aarhus, Working Paper No.2002-26.  
<http://www.socsci.aau.dk/ccws/Workingpapers/2002-26-TheDependentVariableProblem-cgp.PDF>

Ravi Kanbur. 2006. "What's Social Policy got to do with Economic Growth?" Department of Applied Economics and Management Cornell University, Working Paper No.2006-05.  
<http://aem.cornell.edu/research/researchpdf/wp0605.pdf>

Assar Lindbeck. 2002. "The European Social Model: Lessons for Developing Countries." Asian Development Bank Economics and Research Department Working Paper Series No. 11. [http://www.adb.org/Documents/ERD/Working\\_Papers/wp011.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/ERD/Working_Papers/wp011.pdf)

James Midgley and Kwong-leung Tang. 2001. "Social Policy, Economic Growth and Developmental Welfare." *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 10(4):244-52.

Mkandawire, T. (2006). "Social Development Policies: New Challenges for the Social Sciences." *International Social Science Journal*, Vol.58, Issue 189, pp.395-404.

### **Week 5, Oct 1: Family policy I: Providing income support to children**

Ken Battle, Michael Mendelson, Daniel Meyer, Jane Millar and Peter Whiteford. 2001. "Cash for Kids in Four Countries: Child Benefits in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States." *Focus* 21(3):44-49. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc213.pdf#page=44>

Daniel R. Meyer. 2001. "Income Support for Children in the United States." *Focus* 21(3):-38-43. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc213.pdf#page=38>

Jonathan Bradshaw. 2007. "Child Benefit Packages in 22 Countries." Pp. 141-57 in Helmut Wintersberger, Leena Alanen, Thomas Olk and Jens Qvortrup, eds. *Childhood, Generational Order and the Welfare State: Exploring Children's Social and Economic Welfare*. University Press of Southern Denmark.

Donald Hirsch. 2006. *What Will It Take to End Child Poverty? Firing on All Cylinders*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781859355008.pdf>

### **Week 6, Oct 8: Family policies II: Reconciling parenthood and employment**

Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers. 2003. *Families that Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2000. *Families and the World of Work: Four Country Profiles of Family-Sensitive Policies*. New York: United Nations. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/WorkandFamily1s.PDF>

### **Week 7, Oct 15: Family policies III: Divorce, paternity, child support**

Christine Skinner, Jonathan Bradshaw and Jacqueline Davidson. 2007. *Child Support Policy: An International Perspective*. London: Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 405. <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/rrep405.pdf>

Lee Rainwater and Timothy M. Smeeding. 2004. "Single-Parent Poverty, Inequality, and the Welfare State." Pp. 96-115 in Daniel P. Moynihan, Timothy M. Smeeding, and Lee Rainwater, eds., *The Future of the Family*. New York: Russell Sage.

**PAPER OUTLINE DUE NOON, MONDAY OCTOBER 20**

**Week 8, Oct 22: NO GROUP MEETING. REQUIRED INDIVIDUAL MEETING WITH INSTRUCTOR**

**Week 9, Oct 29: Family policies IV: Old-age income supports, part 1**

Robert Holzmann and Richard Hinz. 2005. *Old Age Income Support in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

**Week 10, Nov 5: Family policies IV: Old-age income supports, part 2**

Isabella Aboderin. 2006. *Intergenerational Support and Old Age in Africa*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

**Week 11, Nov 12: Family policies V: Income support during unemployment**

Wayne Vroman and Vera Brusentsev. 2005. *Unemployment Compensation throughout the World: A Comparative Analysis*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

**Week 12, Nov 19: Presentations I**

**Week 13, Nov 26: Presentations II**

**Week 14, Dec 3: Presentations III**

**Week 15, Dec 10: Presentations IV**

**5 p.m., December 16, PAPER DUE**

**Week 16 (optional), Dec 17: Brunch at 1141 Elizabeth (9 a.m.)**