

## **Social Work 944 - Social Welfare Policy**

Spring, 2007  
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Office Hours: Weds 11:30-12:30 in Social  
Work and by appointment

Seminar meeting: 9:00-11:30 Wednesday  
School of Social Work, Room 114

### **I. Course Overview**

This seminar provides a selective survey of U.S. social welfare policy, with particular emphasis on poverty and economic support policy. It is one of the required proseminars for Social Welfare doctoral students and is open to interested graduate students from other departments. In addition to covering current social policy issues, in this seminar we will explicitly consider alternative approaches to social policy analysis. Much of the research reviewed employs the theoretical framework of neoclassical microeconomic theory and standard techniques of quantitative policy analysis. However, we will also consider research that employs alternative methods and theoretical perspectives.

### **II. Objectives**

The primary objective of this seminar is to increase students' ability to critically analyze current social welfare policies, with particular focus on the advantages and limitations of standard policy analysis and alternative approaches. Seminar participants will also acquire an understanding of selected current U.S. social policies and improve their fluency in writing about and discussing social welfare policy issues and related research.

### **III. Course Content**

A detailed course outline is included in Section VII. No single course can begin to cover the range of substantive areas in social policy. The topics covered in the main seminar meetings and in student presentations will serve as examples of social policies and approaches to policy analysis. We will review public assistance policy issues with a particular emphasis on economic support (especially welfare and Social Security). We will consider conceptual and technical issues in the measurement of poverty and the implications of demographic change for social policy. The policies and problem areas covered are central to social policy, but are not comprehensive. However, the theories and techniques considered are applicable across problem areas.

### **IV. Readings**

Required readings include a reading packet and the following books, available at the University Bookstore:

- Sheldon Danziger and Robert Haveman. 2001. *Understanding Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Students will also be asked to read one of the following, which I recommend buying online:

- William Julius Wilson. 1987. *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

- Greg Duncan, Aletha Huston, and Thomas Weisner. 2007. *Higher ground: New Hope for the working poor and their children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

## V. Assignments and Evaluation of Student Outcomes

The seminar has three primary components:

**1) Readings and regular SW 944 seminar meetings.** To prepare for active seminar discussion, students are asked to:

- Complete assigned readings prior to the seminar meeting.
- Complete 10 weekly critiques of the readings. Reading critiques should be a single page (single spaced), about half devoted to *integrative* summary comments (demonstrating familiarity with all the required readings for the week), and about half to critical responses or questions. Given 13 weeks of readings (no readings for the first class) each student may skip 3 weeks. Note, however, that a final critique (week 15) is required for all students. For credit, critiques should be received by the instructor as an e-mail attachment no later than **9am Tuesday**-- 24 hours prior to the seminar.

### 2) Essays

In addition to the other writing assignments detailed above, there are two required essays. The first essay (5-8 pages double spaced) will address welfare policy. You will be asked to apply your preferred approach to an analysis of recent welfare reforms and discuss the implications for future policy development. This paper will be due in class on **March 14**.

The second essay will follow the same format as the first, but will apply to one of the four final policy areas. By the second week of class we will finalize the policy areas to be covered, and students will be assigned to one of the areas (most students will get their first or second choice area). We will discuss two topics in each class session in weeks 13 and 14. Essays will be due by **noon the Monday before your session**. While students will write individual papers, the group of students writing on each topic is responsible for coordinating the discussion of their topic.

**Final grades** will be based on the reading critiques (25% total), seminar papers (25% each; 50% total), and contributions to class discussion, including during group presentation (25%). This is a graduate seminar. The hope and expectation is that the seminar will provide a collaborative learning environment. For that reason, substantial credit is given for assignments aimed at preparing us for a substantive discussion. Students consistently completing the assignments at the expected graduate level will receive a final grade of AB. Students completing outstanding assignments will receive an A. Students generally completing assignments, but not consistently meeting graduate level standards, will receive a B.

**Academic honesty** is a central requirement for graduate study. Please review the attached School of Social Work guidelines on plagiarism. If a student intentionally misrepresents another author's work as their own, the student will receive no credit for the assignment and a final semester grade no higher than a C.

For the assignments in this class, I recommend the following strategy for handling citations and references.

For direct quotes:

- Use quotations as sparingly as possible. Only when you can not paraphrase (e.g, describe the author's ideas in your own words) should you use quotation. (*You should almost never use quotations in assignments for this class*)
- If you do use quotations, use quotation marks.
- Following the quotation, if the quotation is from an assigned reading please provide the author's name and the page number for the quote in parentheses. (A full reference is not necessary). If the quotation is not from an assigned reading, you must provide both a parenthetical citation, including author and page number, and a full reference at the end of the paper

For paraphrasing:

- If it is clear from the context of the text that you are discussing an assigned reading (e.g, "Meyer and Sullivan suggest..."), you do not need to provide parenthetical references.
- If you are paraphrasing work that is not assigned for the week, a parenthetical reference including authors name and page number is necessary. If the reading was assigned for SW944—a full citation in the list of references is not necessary. If the reading was not assigned for SW944 a full citation in a list of references is necessary.

## **VI Course evaluations and adjustments**

The syllabus lays out a plan for the course and a set of expectations for the topics to be covered, assignments and participation. Substantial adjustments in assignments and content are often difficult to accommodate, in part because students' preferences and needs vary. That said, there will be two opportunities for formal course evaluation (mid term and at the end of class) and many opportunities for students to offer suggestions or request changes-- in seminar, office hours, or by e-mail. I welcome your feedback on how to enhance the learning experience.

## VII. Seminar Schedule and Readings

All required readings not appearing in *Understanding Poverty* are in the reading packet. The optional readings are available online.

### Introduction

#### **Week 1 (1/24) The scope of social policy and social policy analysis**

- Readings
  - Gladwell, M. (Feb. 2006). Million Dollar Murray, *New Yorker*.

#### **Week 2 (1/31) Introduction to social policy**

- Readings:
  - Dolgoff, R. and D. Feldstein. 2003. Chapters 7 and 9: "Examining a Social Welfare Program: Structural Components, Alternative Program Characteristics, and Evaluation," "Current Social Welfare Programs-Economic Security,"
  - Scholz, J.K. and K. Levine. 2001. Chapter 6, "The Evolution of Income Support Policy in Recent Decades" in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Preferences for week 13 & 14 topics (please list at bottom of your reading critique or send by separate e-mail if you are not completing a critique this week).

### Case 1: Welfare and Welfare Reform

#### **Week 3 (2/7) "Standard" policy analysis**

- Readings:
  - Ellwood, D. *Poor Support* (p. 14-29)
  - Meyer, B.D. and D.T. Rosenbaum. 2001. "Welfare, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the Labor Supply of Single Mothers." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol.116, No. 3, pp. 1063-1114.
  - Grogger, J. & L. A. Karoly. 2005. Chapter 2-3 in *Welfare Reform: Effects of a Decade of Change*. Harvard University Press.
  - Jencks, C., Winship, S. & Swingle, J. 2006. *Welfare redux*. *American Prospect*.

### Optional

- \*For students who wish to review basic microeconomics: Ehrenberg & Smith. 1991. *Modern Labor Economics*. Chapter 6
- Blank, R. M. 2002. "Evaluating Welfare Reform in the United States." *Journal of Economic Literature* Vol 40: 1105-1166.
- For a summary of the federal and Wisconsin programs:
  - "Comparison of PRIOR LAW and the PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1996 (P.L.104-193). Available: <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/isp/reform.htm>
  - "Comparison of AFDC to W-2" Wisconsin DWD. Available: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/w2/afdcw2.htm>
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)

#### **Week 4 (2/14) Political analysis**

- Readings:
  - Weaver, R. K. 2000. *Ending Welfare as We Know It*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Pp.23-53.
  - Piven, F.F. 2005. "Institutions and Agents in the Politics of Welfare Cutbacks"
  - Weaver, R. K. 2002. "Polls, Priming, and the Politics of Welfare Reform," in J. Manza, F.L. Cook, and B.I. Page, eds. *Navigating Public Opinion*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp 106-123.
  - Meyer, M. 2000. How welfare offices undermine welfare reform. *American Prospect*.
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)

#### **Week 6 (2/21) Gender as an organizing frame**

- Readings:
  - Abramovitz, M. 1996, Revised. *Regulating the Lives of Women*. Chapter 1 "A feminist perspective on the welfare state."
  - Mink, G. 1998. *Welfare's End*. Chapter 1.
  - Curran, L. and L. Abrams. 2000. "Making Men Into Dads." *Gender and Society* 14(5): 662-678.
  - Orloff, A. S. 2001. "Ending the Entitlements of Poor Single Mothers." In N.J.. Hirschmann and U. Libert, eds., *Women and Welfare*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp.133-59.
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)

#### **Week 5 (2/28) Developmental perspective**

- Readings:
  - Yoshikawa H.K. and J. Hsueh. 2001. "Child Development and Public Policy: Toward a Dynamic Systems Perspective." *Child Development*. 72(6): 1887-1903.
  - Yoshikawa, H., K. Magnuson, J. Bos, and J. Hsueh. 2003. "Effects of Earnings-Supplement Policies on Adult Economic and Middle-Childhood Outcomes Differ for the "Hardest to Employ". *Child Development* 74(5):1500-1521.
  - Levine, P. B. and D. J. Zimmerman. 2005. "Children's Welfare Exposure and Subsequent Development." *Journal of Public Economics*. January pp. 31-56.
  - Chase-Lansdale, P. L. & L. Pittman 2002. Welfare Reform and Parenting: Reasonable Expectations. *Future of Children*, Vol. 12(1), 169-185. (Winter/Spring2002): Impact of Welfare Reform on Children. Issue editor: Margie K. Shields. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA.
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)

## Case 2: Poverty

### **Week 7 (3/7) Poverty analysis**

- Readings:
  - Hoynes, H, M. Page & A. Stevens, 2005 *Poverty in America: Trends and Explanations*. NBER Working Paper #11681.
  - Cancian, M. and D. Reed. 2001. Chapter 2, “Changes in Family Structure: Implications for Poverty and Related Policy” in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
  - Burtless, G. and T.M. Smeeding. 2001. Chapter 1, “The Level, Trend, and Composition of Poverty” (pp.36-68) in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
  
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)

### **Week 8 (3/14) Measuring poverty—technical and comparative issues**

- Readings:
  - Citro, C.F. and R.T. Michael. 1995. Chapter 1, especially “What is Poverty” and “The Official U.S. Poverty Measure.” pp.19-31. In Citro and Michael (eds.) *Measuring Poverty: A New Approach*. Washington, DC: NAS Press.
  - Smeeding, T.M., L. Rainwater and G. Burtless. 2001. Chapter 5, “U.S. Poverty in a Cross-National Context” in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
  - Cancian, M, and D. R. Meyer. 2004. “Alternative Measures of Economic Success among TANF Participants: Avoiding Poverty, Hardship and Dependence on Public Assistance.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 23(3):531-548
  - Meyer B. and J. Sullivan. 2003. “Measuring the Well-Being of the Poor Using Income and Consumption.” *Journal of Human Resources* 38:1180-1221.
  - Rector, R. & K. A. Johnson, 2004. Executive Summary, *Understanding Poverty in America*.
  
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Essay 1 Due

### **Week 9 (3/21)- CLASS DOES NOT MEET**

- Readings One of the following:
  - William Julius Wilson. 1987. *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
  - Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein. 1997. *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
  - Greg Duncan, Aletha Huston, and Thomas Weisner. 2007. *Higher ground: New Hope for the working poor and their children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

### **Week 10 (3/28) Class analysis of poverty**

- Readings:
  - Wright, E.O. “The Class Analysis of Poverty” Chapter. 2 in *Interrogating Inequality*. Pp. 32-50 (p. 39-45 optional)

- Wright, E. O. "From stratification to class analysis (and back again?). Paper presented at the American Sociological Association.
- Abramovitz, M. 2001. "Everyone is Still on Welfare" p. 297-308.
- O'Conner, A. 2001. *Poverty knowledge*, Chapter 10 Dependency, the Underclass, and a new welfare "consensus" (pp. 243-283).

Optional:

- Corcoran, M. 2001. Chapter 4, "Mobility, Persistence, and the Consequences of Poverty for Children: Child and Adult Outcomes" in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
- Wright, E. O. and R. E. Dwyer. 2003. "The Patterns of Job Expansions in the USA: a comparison of the 1960s and 1990s." *Socio-Economic Review* 1, 289-325.  
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/SER%20paper.pdf>

- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Presentation of *The truly disadvantaged*

Topics in Social Policy: Applying multiple frameworks

**Week 11 (4/11) Social Security**

- John, D.C. (2004) "How to Fix Social Security" Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #1811 <http://www.heritage.org/Research/SocialSecurity/bg1811.cfm>
  - GAO report on the proposals of the 2001 commission (2003): <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03310.pdf> and distributional implications (2004): <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04872t.pdf>
  - Diamond, P. A., & Orzag, P. R. (2005). *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19, 11-32.
  - Herd, P. 2005. Reforming a breadwinner welfare state. *Social Forces*, 83, 1365-1394.
- Assignments:
    - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
    - Presentation of *Making ends meet*.

**Week 12 (4/18) Child Support Guest Lecture Dan Meyer**

- Readings TBA
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Presentation of *Higher ground*.

**Week 13 (4/25) Student presentations: Housing and Education Policy**

- Readings:
  - Yinger, J. 2001. "Housing Discrimination and Residential Segregation as Causes of Poverty" in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
  - Additional readings TBA

- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Essay 2 due Monday 4/17 at noon for students presenting this week

**Week 14 (5/2) Student presentations: Health and Mental Health Policy**

- Readings:
  - Mullahy J. and B. Wolfe. 2001. "Health Policies for the Non-elderly Poor" " in Danziger and Haveman. *Understanding Poverty*.
  - Additional readings TBA
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am)
  - Essay 2 due Monday 4/24 at noon for students presenting this week

Wrap-up

**Week 15 (5/9)**

- Readings:
  - Blank, R. 2003. Selecting Among Anti-Poverty Policies: Can An Economist be Both Critical and Caring? *Review of Social Economy*, 61(4), 447-469.
  - Danziger and Haveman, *Understanding Poverty*. "Introduction" pp. 1-10, Chapter 13 "Politics, Race, and Poverty Research" (Loury) pp.454-62, and Chapter 14 "Research on Poverty and Antipoverty Policies" (Waldfogel) pp.463-72).
  - O'Connor, A. 2001. *Poverty Knowledge*. Chapter 11, "The End of Welfare and the Case for a New Poverty Knowledge" (pp.284-95).
- Assignments:
  - Reading critique (due Tuesday at 8am); the critique is *required* this week