POL/HIS 3005: Social Welfare Policy

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Lecture (FMWA): M/W, 4:10-5:25 pm, Vert 4-120
Lecture (PMWA): M/W, 5:50-7:05 pm, Vert 4-220
Office Hours: W, 1:30-3:30 pm or by appointment, Vert 5-271

Spring 2020

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the politics of social policy in the United States. We will begin by surveying the state of poverty and inequality, then review the origins of modern social insurance and redistribution. Next, we will unpack what social science can tell us about why these policies look the way they do and what their future may hold. Finally, we will dive into specific policy areas, addressing current debates using the social science lens we've developed. The course builds to an op-ed assignment on a policy of your choice, which you will submit to a media outlet of your choosing.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, a successful student will be able to:
1. Navigate the array of public policies designed to address poverty, inequality, and opportunity in the United States.
2. Apply concepts of institutional and behavioral political science to current policy debates discussed in mass media.
3. Convey ideas through persuasive, written argument in the form of an op-ed.

Readings

All readings will be posted on Blackboard. Readings are subject to change up to one week before their assigned class. Please check the syllabus posted on Blackboard for updates.

Course Assignments and Grading

Grades will be composed of the following:
- 10% Participation
- 40% Daily quizzes
- 10% Peer review of op-ed draft
- 20% Final op-ed
- 20% Final exam

Quizzes

Short quizzes will be used at the start of randomly selected classes to incentivize active reading. The quizzes consist of multiple choice, content-based questions. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Absence on the day of the quiz will count as a zero, unless it is excused.

In almost every class, there will be a quiz of 5 questions. The quizzes will cover material from that day?s assigned reading and the previous lecture. There will be 20 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will drop your lowest 5 scores and average the rest. Your quiz average will constitute 40% of your grade.

Why have frequent quizzes instead of a few exams? Good question. There is evidence that frequent quizzes improve students? learning significantly. For example, in one recent study in a large introductory psychology class, instituting on-line quizzes appeared to improve students? performance. [1]. Students taking that class also did better in their other courses that semester, and in the classes they took the next semester. This suggests that regular assessment helps students develop study habits that are beneficial in other courses, not just the course that assigns quizzes. Frequent quizzes also help me ascertain how well certain concepts are understood, so that I can adjust the content of lectures accordingly.

Because I am giving you 5 get-out-of-jail-free cards, there will be no makeups (other than for religious observances [see policy below] or Baruch athletic or other events that you are required to participate in).

Assignments

Assignments have strict deadlines of 11:59:59 pm on the due date. Missing this deadline by less than one day will result in a 10 percentage point deduction from the assignment's grade. Each additional day late will result in an additional 10 percentage point deduction. For example, for an assignment is due Sunday evening, submission on Tuesday morning will result in a maximum grade of 80/100. This is non-negotiable. Any potential conflicts need to be brought to my attention more than 72 hours in advance of the assignment deadline.

Op-Ed

You will write an op-ed on a social welfare policy of your choosing. You will graded on the rough draft as well as the comments you provide on a peer's rough draft. For full credit, you must submit your op-ed to an external media outlet, turning in an email of the submission to the medial outlet along with your final draft.

Lateness and Participation Policy

You are required to come to class on time. If you are not present at the beginning of class, you will not be eligible to take the day's quiz.

You are expected to actively contribute to the discussion, both in small groups and as a whole. A component of participation is respect for your peers. Laptops are permitted for note taking. However, checking email, text messages, social media, or unrelated websites in class is unprofessional, will count against your participation grade, and may result in you being asked to leave lecture.

Exams

There will be a final exam on May 18th, depending on your section. Exams are closed book and closed notes. Makeup exams during the semester are possible for excused absences. However, there are no makeups for the final exam.

Disabilities Accommodation

It is college policy to provide accommodations and academic adjustments for students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class is requested to speak directly to Student

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[1]Pennebaker JW, Gosling SD, Ferrell JD (2013). ?Daily Online Testing in Large Classes: Boosting College Performance while Reducing Achievement Gaps.? PLoS ONE 8(11): e79774. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0079774

Disability Services located in Newman Vertical Campus, Room 2-271 as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential.

Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to work together to understand and synthesize the readings and materials. However, Baruch College's policy on academic honesty will be enforced. *Any* plagiarizing or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. There are no exceptions.

Important Dates

- Sunday, February 16th - Last day to drop *without* a grade of W

- Monday, March 23rd - Op-ed draft for peer review

- Wednesday, April 1st - Last day to drop *with* a grade of W

- Monday, April 6th - Comments on peer's op-ed

- Tuesday, April 7th - Classes follow Wednesday schedule

- Monday, April 27th - Op-ed due

- Wednesday, May 13th - Last day of class

- Monday, May 18th - Final exam, 3:30 to 5:30 pm & 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Course Calendar

Module 1. What is Social Policy?

- Monday, January 27th - Introduction - *What is our social responsibility to address poverty and inequality?*

  - No assigned reading.

- Wednesday, January 29th - The Status Quo - *What is the state of inequality and poverty in the United States?*

  - Bartels, L.M., 2018. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age.* Princeton University Press. pp. 1 - 28.

- Monday, February 3rd - Class canceled

- Wednesday, February 5th - Class canceled

- Monday, February 10th - The Comparative Context - *How does the American welfare state compare to its peers?*

  - Alesina, A., and Glaeser, E.L., 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference.* Oxford University Press. pp. 1-76.

- Wednesday, February 12th - College closed

- Monday, February 17th - Presidents' Day, College closed

- Wednesday, February 19th - Causal Inference - *How can I think like a scientist when it comes to politics?*

- Angrist, J.D. and Pischke, J.S., 2014. *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect.* Princeton University Press. pp. 1-33.
- Knox, D. and Mummolo, J., 2020. "Making inferences about racial disparities in police violence". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(3), pp.1261-1262.

- Monday, February 24th - Taxes - *How do we pay for social policy and who pays the most?*

  - Faricy, C.G., 2015. *Welfare for the Wealthy: Parties, Social Spending, and Inequality in the United States.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 82-121. and 168-200.

- Wednesday, February 26th - American Social Welfare History - *How was the welfare state built then dismantled?*

  - Blau, J. and Ambrovitz, M. 2010. *The Dynamics of Social Welfare Policy.* Oxford University Press. pp. 261-296.
  - Badger, E. and Sanger Katz, M. "Who's Able-Bodied Anyway?" *New York Times.* 3 Feb 2018.

Module 2. The Politics of Social Policy

- Monday, March 2nd - Ideology - *What are the roots of our political beliefs?*

  - Gilens, M., 2009. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy.* University of Chicago Press, Chapter 2, pp. 31-59.
  - Rawls, J., 1971. 'Distributive Justice,' in Alan Ryan, ed., *Justice*, 73-94.
  - Nozick, R., 1974. 'Distributive Justice,' in Alan Ryan, ed., *Justice*, 95-116.
  - Friedman, M., 1980. "What Does 'Created Equal' Mean?"

- Wednesday, March 4th - How to Write and Op-Ed

  - *Packet of Op-eds.*

- Monday, March 9th - Perceptions of Poverty and Inequality - *Why does our democracy redistribute so little?*

  - Alesina, A., and Glaeser, E.L., 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference.* Oxford University Press. pp. 183-216.
  - Trump, K.S., 2018. Income inequality influences perceptions of legitimate income differences. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48(4), pp.929-952.

- Wednesday, March 11th - Voice and Participation - *Why does it matter who participates in politics?*

  - Schlozman, K.L., Verba, S. and Brady, H.E., 2013. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal political voice and the broken promise of American democracy.* Princeton University Press. pp. 1-30.

- Monday, March 16th - Institutions - *How do our institutions affect policy outcomes?*

  - Alesina, A., and Glaeser, E.L., 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference.* Oxford University Press. pp. 77-132.

- Wednesday, March 18th - Interest Groups - *Why does organization matter for political change?* - Op-ed draft due

  - Madison, J., 1787. *Federalist No. 10.*
  - Hertel-Fernandez, A., 2019. *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation.* Oxford University Press. pp. 174-242.
  - Feigenbaum, J., Hertel-Fernandez, A., and Williamson, V., 2018. "Right-to-Work Laws Have Devastated Unions – and Democrats". *The New York Times.*

- Monday, March 23rd - Policy Feedback and Path Dependence - *How does policy design affect political success?*

  - Mettler, S., 2014. *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy.* University of Chicago Press. pp 8-67.

- Wednesday, March 25th - Identity and Race - *Why is race so important in the politics of social policy?*

  - Gilens, M., 2009. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy.* University of Chicago Press, Chapter 3, pp. 60-79.
  - Alesina, A., and Glaeser, E.L., 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference.* Oxford University Press. pp. 133-181.

- Monday, March 30th - Federalism and State Politics- *What are the benefits of living in a united state of America?*

  - Michener, J., 2018. *Fragmented Democracy.* Cornell University Press. pp. 1-32.
  - Campbell, A., 2014. *Trapped in America's Safety Net: One Family's Struggle.* University of Chicago Press. pp. 71-100.

- Wednesday, April 1st - Local Governments - *Why is it hard for progressive cities to practice progressive politics?*

  - Trounstine, J., 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-73.

- Monday, April 6th - Segregation I - *How does policy shape where we live in a region?* - Op-ed comments due

  - Trounstine, J., 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 73-142.

- Tuesday, April 7th - Segregation II- *How does policy shape where we live in a region?*

  - Trounstine, J., 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 143-216

- Wednesday, April 8th - Spring Recess

- Monday, April 13th - Spring Recess

- Wednesday, April 15th - Spring Recess

- Monday, April 20th - Intergroup Contact - *Does where we live affect our political beliefs?*

  - Enos, Ryan. 2017. *The Space Between Us: Social Geography and Politics.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-33 and 143-179.

Module 3. Becoming a Policy Expert

- Wednesday, April 22nd - Social Security

  - Campbell, A., 2003 *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Citizen Activism and the American Welfare State.* pp. 1-37.

- Monday, April 27th - 'Welfare' and 'Food Stamps' - Op-ed due

  - Edin, K. and Shaefer, H. L., 2015. *$2.00 a day: Living on Almost Nothing in America.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. pp. 1-35.
  - Matthews, D., 2016. "'If the goal was to get rid of poverty, we failed': The Legacy of the 1996 Welfare Reform" *Vox.*

- Wednesday, April 29th - Healthcare

  - Hacker. J.S. (1998). "The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy," *Studies in American Political Development* 12: 57-130.

- Monday, May 4th - Employment Policy

  - Steensland, B. (2006). 'Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy,' American Journal of Sociology 111(5): 1273-1326.

- Wednesday, May 6th - Education

  - *To be determind.*

- Monday, May 11th - Housing

  - Glaeser, E. and Gyourko, J. 2008. *Rethinking Federal Housing Supply: How to Make Housing Plentiful and Affordable.* Chapter 1, 5 and Conclusion.

- Wednesday, May 13th - Homelessness and Substance Use Disorders

  - Quinones, S., 2015. *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic.* Bloomsbury Publishing USA. *selections.*

  - de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin and Hankinson, Michael. "Democrats are more likely to support funding opioid treatment programs compared to Republicans, but both are opposed to building clinics nearby." *LSE USCentre: American Politics and Policy.* October 2019.

- Monday, May 18th

  - F Section, 3:30 to 5:30 pm
  - P Section, 6:00 to 8:00 pm