Social Welfare Policy
PSC 72500 // SOC 85902// WSCP 81000
3 credits
Professor Janet Gornick
Fall 2016

Wednesdays 4:15pm to 6:15pm / Room 6114

Faculty: Janet Gornick
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00pm to 4:00pm, or by appointment.
Call or email with questions at any time.

Course Description:

This course will examine social welfare policy in the United States, in historical and cross-national perspective.

We will begin with an overview of the development of social welfare policy in the U.S. We will focus on crucial historical periods – including the Civil War years, the Progressive Era, the New Deal, the Great Society, and the “welfare reform” of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Second, we will assess “the big picture” of the American welfare state, through the lens of its underlying institutional framework.

Third, we will analyze a set of contemporary challenges in the U.S. that call for active policy responses, such as inequality, health insurance, low-wage work, and care.

Finally, we will survey selected social policy lessons from other high-income countries, especially in Europe, where social provisions are typically more extensive than they are in the U.S.

Course Requirements:

- weekly summary of readings (to be discussed) 15% of grade
- attendance, class participation, and supervision of one class session 15% of grade
- mid-term exam (October 5, in class) 30% of grade
- final exam 40% of grade
Course Overview:

Introduction and Historical Overview

August 31    Class #1    Introduction to the Course
September 7  Class #2    Historical Perspectives I: From 1601 to 1930
September 14 Class #3    Historical Perspectives II: From 1930 to the Early 2000s


September 21 Class #4    The U.S. in Comparative Perspective
September 28 Class #5    The New Economic Insecurity
October 5      Class #6    MIDTERM EXAM (in class)

III. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Contemporary Challenges

October 12    —        no class / Yom Kippur
October 19    Class #7    Inequality
October 26    —        class cancelled / professor out of the country
November 2    Class #8    Health Insurance
November 9    Class #9    Low-Wage Work
November 16   Class #10   Care and Care Work

IV. Policy Lessons from Other High-Income Countries

November 23   Class #11    “Lessons from Europe”: Health Care, Pensions, and Labor Market Policy
November 30   Class #12    Work-Family Reconciliation Policies

V. Conclusions

December 7    Class #13    Wrapping Up
December 14    —        Final exam time
Books:

These books are required reading. I recommend that you buy all of them. You should be able to purchase the whole set for about $200 – or much less, if you buy Kindle or used versions.

NOTE: Four of the books – marked with *** below – are published by the Russell Sage Foundation Press (RSF). RSF has offered substantial discounts if you buy the books through them. I will distribute information in class.

- For September 21
  *What is Social Policy: Understanding the Welfare State*
  Daniel Béland, 2010
  Polity Press / Available from Amazon, $22.95

- For September 28
  *The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Security and the Decline of the American Dream*
  Oxford University Press / Available from Amazon, $13.30

- For October 19
  *The Great Divergence: America’s Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do About It*
  Timothy Noah, 2012
  Bloomsbury Press / Available from Amazon, $12.41

- For November 2 ***
  *Beyond Obamacare: Life, Death, and Social Policy*
  James S. House, 2016
  Russell Sage Foundation Press / Available from Amazon, $23.79

- For November 9 ***
  *What Works for Workers? Public Policies and Innovative Strategies for Low-Wage Workers*
  Stephanie Luce, Jennifer Luff, Joseph A. McCartin, Ruth Milkman (Eds.), 2014
  Russell Sage Foundation Press / Available from Amazon, $47.50

- For November 16 ***
  *For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States*
  Nancy Folbre (Ed.), 2012
  Russell Sage Foundation Press / Available from Amazon, $33.74

- For November 23
  *Lessons From Europe: What Americans Can Learn From European Public Policies*
  R. Daniel Kelemen (Ed.), 2013
  Sage - CQ Press / Available from Amazon, $41.00

- For November 30 ***
  *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*
  Russell Sage Foundation Press / Available from Amazon, $19.95

These books have been placed on reserve at the Mina Rees Library.
Required Reading:

All reading should be completed before the corresponding class.

NOTE: Additional required readings may be distributed during the semester; mainly, these will be news or opinion pieces.

I. Introduction and Historical Overview

August 31    Class #1    Introduction to the Course

September 7   Class #2    Historical Perspectives I: From 1601 to 1930

Reading: Social Welfare: A History of the American Response to Need
June Axinn and Mark J. Stern
Sixth Edition, 2005
Pearson / Allyn & Bacon
Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 The Colonial Period: 1647-1776 (skim)
Chapter 3 The Pre-Civil War Period: 1777-1860 (skim)
Chapter 4 The Civil War and After: 1860-1900
Chapter 5 Progress and Reform: 1900-1930
NB: all chapter appendices and documents can be skimmed
(to be distributed in pdf)

September 14   Class #3    Historical Perspectives II: From 1930 to the Early 2000s

Reading: Social Welfare: A History of the American Response to Need
June Axinn and Mark J. Stern
Sixth Edition, 2005
Pearson / Allyn & Bacon
Chapter 6 The Depression and The New Deal: 1930-1940
Chapter 7 War and Prosperity: 1940-1970
Chapter 8 Economic and Social Stagnation: 1970-1990
NB: all chapter appendices and documents can be skimmed
(to be distributed in pdf)


September 21   Class #4    The U.S. in Comparative Perspective

Reading: What is Social Policy: Understanding the Welfare State
Daniel Bélard, 2010
Polity Press
September 28  Class #5  The New Economic Insecurity
Reading:  The Great Risk Shift:  
The New Economic Security and the Decline of the American Dream  
Jacob S. Hacker  
Oxford University Press

October 5  Class #6  MIDTERM EXAM

III. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Contemporary Challenges

October 19  Class #7  Inequality
Reading:  The Great Divergence: America’s Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do About It  
Timothy Noah, 2012  
Bloomsbury Press

November 2  Class #8  Health Insurance
Reading:  Beyond Obamacare: Life, Death, and Social Policy  
James S. House, 2016  
Russell Sage Foundation Press

November 9  Class #9  Low-Wage Work
Reading:  What Works for Workers? Public Policies and Innovative Strategies for Low-Wage Workers  
Stephanie Luce, Jennifer Luff, Joseph A. McCartin, Ruth Milkman (Eds.), 2014  
Russell Sage Foundation Press  
Chapter 6  Career Ladders in the Low-Wage Labor Market  
Chapter 7  Employment Subsidies to Firms and Workers...  
Chapter 8  Living Wages, Minimum Wages, and Low-Wage Workers  
Chapter 9  Improving Low-Wage Workers’ Access to Unemployment Insurance

November 16  Class #10  Care
Reading:  For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States  
Nancy Folbre (Ed.), 2012  
Russell Sage Foundation Press  
--  Introduction  
Chapter 6  The Care Policy Landscape  
Chapter 7  The Disparate Impacts of Care Policy  
Chapter 8  A Care Policy and Research Agenda
IV. Policy Lessons from Other High-Income Countries

November 23  Class #11  “Lessons from Europe”: Health Care, Pensions, and Labor Market Policy

Reading:  Lessons From Europe: What Americans Can Learn From European Public Policies
R. Daniel Kelemen (Ed.), 2013
Sage - CQ Press
Chapter 1  Introduction: Why Look to Europe for Lessons?
Chapter 3  The Role of Regulation in Health Care Policy
Chapter 4  Pensions: Who is Learning from Whom?
Chapter 5  Labor Market Policy: Toward a “Flexicurity” Model in the United States
Chapter 10  Transatlantic Lesson Drawing: Utopia, Road to Ruin, or Source of Practical Advice

November 30  Class #12  Work-Family Reconciliation Policies

Reading:  Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment
Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers
2003 (paperback 2005)
Russell Sage Foundation Press
Chapter 1  Introduction
Chapter 2  The Changing American Family (skim)
Chapter 3  The U.S. in Cross-National Perspective (skim)
Chapter 4  Reconciling the Conflicts (skim)
Chapter 5  Family Leave Policy
Chapter 6  Regulation of Working Time
Chapter 7  Child Care, Preschool, and Public Schooling

V. Conclusions

December 7  Class #13  Wrapping Up