

**Social Welfare 553**  
**Contemporary Social Welfare Policy**

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**Overview**

As the first of three parts in the first-year doctoral social welfare policy sequence, this course introduces students to contemporary empirical research in policy analysis and evaluation. The objectives of this course are:

- to build on MSW-level macro practice understandings of American social policy;
- to provide a conceptual grounding for macro-level research on social conditions, public solutions and program or policy impacts;
- to further students' understanding of contemporary empirical policy research through discussion and critique of data-based studies; and
- to develop doctoral-level analytic and communication skills.

Course activities are designed to immerse and engage students in the professional practice of thinking and talking about policy research. Course time will be allocated to a mixture of activities including seminar-style discussion, small group discussions, presentations, peer consultation, and limited lectures as necessary to explain background concepts.

The class will work best if all members contribute both comments and listening in a thoughtful manner. I expect you to have read and thought about the readings before the class in which they are to be discussed. Bring copies of the readings and/or detailed notes to class.

There are two major assignments for this class. First, students will present an empirical article in a "conference style" presentation. See p. 7 for more information. Second, students will complete an individual project on a policy question related to their research interest. More details can be found on p. 8. The project is planned in several stages, with opportunities to reflect on the process of research and writing. Students will present findings to the class and write a formal final paper. Peer consultation and editing activities will be scheduled during the various phases of the project. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with Jen as needed on both the research article and the presentation.

**Specifics**

**Academic Accommodations:** If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students, 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from the office of Disability Resources for Students (formerly Disabled Student Services) indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for this class.

**Web page:** Bookmark <http://faculty.washington.edu/romich/553/Fall05/home.htm> This site will be a source for updates to the syllabus, links to on-line readings, and other class resources.

**Grading:** Numeric grades of 0-4.0 will be given according the following scale:

A/A-	4.0 – 3.7	Mastery of content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion class assignments. The difference between an A and an A- is based on the degree to which these skills are demonstrated.
B+	3.6-3.2	Mastery of subject content and skills at expected competency.
B/B-	3.1-2.8	Mastery of content and/or skills at near-adequate competency, demonstrates learning and potential for mastery.
B-, C, E	2.7 - 0	Demonstrates sub-doctoral level skills and/or understanding of content. Significant areas need improvement to meet course expectations.

Assignment due dates and times are designed to facilitate feedback from Jen and classmates. To motivate promptness, late assignments will lose one point (1.0 on a 4.0 scale) per day or fraction thereof. Grades will be calculated with assignments and activities weighted as follows:

Participation	30%
Course project (including preliminary parts, revisions, the presentation, and the final draft)	55%
Presentation of research article	15%

### **Background knowledge**

This is a doctoral-level course designed for students with a master's degree in social work or comparable preparation. As such, I assume that you are familiar with the history of American social policy (anti-poverty policies in particular), major contemporary social programs, and the mechanisms by which programs are created and implemented; as well as basic principles of the academic research process. The following readings are suggested for students who wish to augment or refresh their background policy knowledge. Additional background readings are included in most weeks.

Ehrenreich, J. (1985). *The altruistic imagination : A history of social work and social policy in the United States*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

An overview of the tension between “retail”(case-management) and “wholesale”(social policy and reform) modes of social work practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

Blank, R. M. (1997). *It takes a nation: A new agenda for fighting poverty*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

A helpful and balanced overview of American poverty and anti-poverty policy written on the eve of the 1996 welfare reforms

Blau, J. (2004). *The dynamics of social welfare policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

An MSW textbook. Part III(Chapters 8-12) contains a helpful march through the major social programs. Blau covers programs and policies in the following areas: income support; jobs and job training; housing; health care; and food and hunger.

Trochim, William M. *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2nd Edition. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/kb/index.htm>> (version current as of 8/16/04).

This website and the parallel printed text are used in the MSW research methods course.

## Course Summary

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings and events</b>
1. Tuesday, October 4	<b>Overview and introduction</b>	<i>Gordon, Lewis &amp; Young (1993), Bengtson and MacDermid (n.d.), Scott (1993), Gueron (2003), Myers (2001), Sanbonmatsu et al (2004)</i> Guest presentation
<b>Policy and income</b>		
2. Tuesday, October 11	<b>The labor market and earnings (<i>condition</i>)</b> Key concept: mechanisms	<i>Burtless &amp; Smeeding (2001), Newman (1999, 2001), Reskin (2003), Budig &amp; England (2001)</i>
3. Tuesday, October 18	<b>State-level welfare reform policies (<i>action</i>)</b> Key concept: tools	<i>Bardach (1996), Scholz &amp; Levine (2002), Salamon (2002), Soss, Schram et al (2001), Meyers, Gornick &amp; Peck (2001)</i> Friday 10/21 – policy description due
4. Tuesday, October 25	<b>Anti-poverty programs (<i>outcomes</i>)</b> Key concept: causality	<i>Shadish, Cook &amp; Campbell (2002); Meyer &amp; Rosenbaum (2000) Michalopoulos, Robins &amp; Card (2005). Duncan, Ludwig &amp; Magnuson (2004)</i>
<b>Policy and health</b>		
5. Tuesday, November 1	<b>Inequality and health</b>	<i>Steel (2004), Kawachi, Wilkinson &amp; Kennedy (1999), Case, Lubotsky &amp; Paxson (2002), Kawachi, Kennedy et al (1999), Williams &amp; Jackson (2005)</i> Peer consultation? Friday 11/4 – 5 page draft due
6. Tuesday, November 8	<b>Health programs</b>	<i>Mullahy &amp; Wolfe (2001), Levy &amp; Meltzer (2004), Lykens &amp; Jargowsky (2002), Kronebusch &amp; Elbel (2004)</i> Peer consultation
<b>Policy over the life course</b>		
7. Tuesday, November 15	<b>Head Start and child care</b>	<i>Yoshikawa &amp; Hsueh (2001), Currie &amp; Thomas (1995), Fuller, Holloway &amp; Liang (1996)</i> Friday 11/18 – 9 page draft due
8. Tuesday, November 22	<b>Social Security and Medicaid</b>	<i>Steuerle &amp; Bakija (1994), Grogan, &amp; Patashnik (2003), Ozawa &amp; Kim (2001), Krueger &amp; Pischke (1992)</i> Peer consultation?
<b>Policy and social welfare research</b>		
9. Tuesday, November 29	<b>Additional topics TBA</b>	<i>Readings TBA</i> Catch up, peer consultation
10. Tuesday, December 6	<b>Student presentations</b>	Wrap up, conclusions Course evaluations Final paper due Tuesday 12/13

## 1. Tuesday, October 4 - Overview and introduction

Gordon, I., Lewis, J., & Young, K. (1993). Perspectives on policy analysis. In M. Hill(Ed.), *The policy process* (pp. 5-9). Hertfordshire, UK: Simon & Schuster.

Bengtson, V. L., & MacDermid, S. M.(n.d.). *How to review a journal article*. Retrieved December 26, 2002, from [http://www.ncfr.org/jmf/review\\_journal\\_howto.htm](http://www.ncfr.org/jmf/review_journal_howto.htm) .

(case) Scott, Esther (1993). *From research to policy: The cigarette excise tax*. Cambridge, MA, John F. Kennedy School of Government Case Program: 24.

(selected parts only) Gueron, Judith M. (2003). "Presidential address - fostering research excellence and impacting policy and practice: The welfare reform story." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 22(2): 163-174.

(selected parts only) Myers Jr., Samuel L. (2001). "Presidential address - analysis of race as policy analysis." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21(2): 169-190.

(skim) Sanbonmatsu, L., J. Brooks-Gunn, G.J. Duncan & J.R. Kling. (2004). Neighborhoods and academic achievement: Results from the Moving to Opportunity experiment. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Working Paper (July).

**Note:** Readings in weeks 2-8 are categorized as background, conceptual or empirical.

- Readings marked as background provide information about the topic or content area of the week. These are optional but may be helpful to refresh or augment prior knowledge.
- Readings marked as conceptual introduce key concepts about methodology or logic of inquiry. These are often difficult and dense readings that should be tackled early and may need to be read several times.
- Empirical articles are generally single journal-length summaries of a single study. These should be relatively straight-forward but need to be read carefully with a mind toward capturing the “intellectual plot line (Bengston & MacDermid n.d.).

## Section 1: Policy and Income

### 2. Tuesday, October 11 – The labor market and earnings (*condition*)

(background) Burtless, G. & T. M. Smeeding (2001). The level, trend, and composition of poverty. *Understanding Poverty*. S. Danziger and R. Haveman. New York, Russell Sage: 27-68.

(background) Newman, K.S. (2001). Hard times on 125<sup>th</sup> Street: Harlem's poor and the crisis of welfare reform. *The American Anthropologist* 103(3): 762-779. \*Note: the presenter of the Newman work below should read the methodological section in the first two pages of this article.

(conceptual) Reskin, B. F. (2003). Including mechanisms in our models of ascriptive inequality. *American Sociological Review* 68(February): 1-21.

(empirical) Newman, K. S. (1999). "Getting a job in the inner city" and "Who's in, who's out?" *No Shame in My Game*. New York, Russell Sage: 62-85 and 230-267.\*

(empirical) Budig, M. J. & P. England (2001). The wage penalty for motherhood. *American Sociological Review* 66: 204-225.

### 3. Tuesday, October 18 – State-level welfare reform policies (*action*)

(background) Bardach, E. (1996). Appendix B: Things governments do. *The Eight-Step Path of Policy Analysis*. Berkeley, CA, Berkeley Academic Press: 69-79.

(background) Scholz, J.K. & K. Levine (2002). The evolution of income support policy in recent decades. *Understanding Poverty*. S. Danziger and R. Haveman. 2001, Russell Sage: 193-228.

(conceptual) Salamon, L.M. (2002). The new governance and the tools of public action. *The Tools of Government: A guide to the new governance*. L. M. Salamon. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1-47.

(empirical) Soss, J., S.F. Schram, T.P. Vartanian, & E. O'Brien. (2001). Setting the terms of relief: Explaining state policy choices in the devolution revolution. *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 378-395.

(empirical) Meyers, M. K., J.C. Gornick, & L.R. Peck. (2001). Packaging support for low-income families: Policy variation across the United States. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 20(3).

### 4. Tuesday, October 25 – Anti-poverty programs (*outcomes*)

(conceptual) Duncan, G. J., J. Ludwig, & K. Magnuson. (2004). The endogeneity problem in developmental studies. *Research in Human Development* 1(1&2): 59-80. (manuscript version)

(conceptual) Shadish, W. R., T.D. Cook, & D.T. Campbell. (2002). Experiments and generalized causal inference. *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin: 1-32.

(empirical) Michalopoulos, C., P. K. Robins and D. Card (2005). "When financial work incentives pay for themselves: Evidence from a randomized social experiment for welfare recipients." *Journal of Public Economics* 89(1): 5-29.

(empirical) Meyer, B.D., & D.T. Rosenbaum. (2000). Making single mothers work: Recent tax and welfare policy and its effects. *National Tax Journal*, 53(4.2), 1027-1061.

## **Section 2: Policy and health**

### **5. Tuesday, November 1 - Inequality and health**

(conceptual) Steel, D. (2004). Social mechanisms and causal inference. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. 34(1): 55-78.

(conceptual) Introduction from Kawachi, I., Wilkinson, R. G., & Kennedy, B. P. (1999). *The Society and Population Health Reader*. New York: The New Press.

(empirical) Case, A., D. Lubotsky, & C. Paxson. (2002). Economic status and health in childhood: The origins of the gradient. *American Economic Review* 92(5): 1308-1334.

(empirical) Kawachi, I., B. P. Kennedy, V. Gupta, & D. Prothrow-Stith. (1999). Women's status and the health of women and men. *The Society and Population Health Reader: Income Inequality and Health*. I. Kawachi, B. P. Kennedy and R. G. Wilkinson. New York, The New Press: 474-491.

(empirical) Williams, David R. and Pamela Braboy Jackson (2005). Social sources of racial disparities in health. *Health Affairs* 24(2): 325-334.

## **6. Tuesday, November 8 - Health programs**

(background) Mullahy, J. & B. L. Wolfe (2001). Health policies for the non-elderly poor. *Understanding Poverty*. S. H. Danziger and R. H. Haveman. New York, Russell Sage: 278-313.

(conceptual) Levy, H. & D. Meltzer (2004). What do we really know about whether health insurance affects health? *Health Policy and the Uninsured*. C. McLaughlin. Washington, DC, Urban Institute Press: (JCPR Working Paper version).

(empirical) Lykens, K. A., & Jargowsky, P. A. (2002). Medicaid matters: Children's health and Medicaid eligibility expansions. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 21(2).

(empirical) Kronebusch, K. & B. Elbel (2004). Enrolling children in public insurance: SCHIP, Medicaid, and state implementation. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 29(3): 451 - 489.

### **Section 3: Policy over the life course**

## **7. Tuesday, November 15 – Child care and Head Start**

(conceptual) Yoshikawa, H. & J. Hsueh (2001). Child development and public policy: Toward a dynamic systems perspective. *Child Development* 72(6): 1887-1903.

(empirical) Currie, J. & D. Thomas. (1995). Does Head Start make a difference? *American Economic Review*. 85(3), 341-64.

(empirical) Fuller, B., S. D. Holloway, M. Rambaud, & C. Eggers-Pierola. (1996). How do mothers chose child care? Alternative cultural models in poor neighborhoods. *Sociology of Education* 69(2): 83-104.

## **8. Tuesday, November 22 – Social Security and Medicaid**

(background) Steuerle, C. Eugene and Jon M. Bakija (1994). "Social Security principles and rationales". *Retooling Social Security for the 21st century: Right and wrong approaches to reform*. Washington, D.C., Urban Institute Press: 332.

(conceptual) Grogan, Colleen M and Eric M Patashnik (2003). "Universalism within targeting: Nursing home care, the middle class, and the politics of the Medicaid program." *The Social Service Review* 77(Mar): 51.

(empirical) Ozawa, Martha N. and Hak-Ju Kim (2001). "Money's worth in Social Security benefits: Black-white differences." *Social Work Research* 25(1): 5-14.

(empirical) Krueger, Alan B. and Jorn Steffen Pischke (1992). "The effect of Social Security on labor supply: A cohort analysis of the notch generation." *Journal of Labor Economics* 10(4): 412-437.

## **9. Tuesday, November 30 – Policy and social welfare research – additional topics**

Readings TBA - Special topics and student presentations

## **10. Tuesday, December 7 – Policy and social welfare research – Wrap-up**

Student presentations and final thoughts

## Research Article Presentations

**Assignment - Present an empirical research article in a conference format.** Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes. Handouts are appreciated and e-mail a copy of the presentation to Jen.

Your presentation will be evaluated based on i.) the extent to which you display a thorough understanding of the article, ii.) how effectively you present the intellectual plot-line, and iii.) mechanics (slide design, timing, etc.). You are invited and encouraged to consult me with any questions about the article in advance of presenting.

I work by **two big rules for academic presentations:**

*Rule 1: "Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them, then tell them what you told them."* Keep reminding your audience of the intellectual plot line. An overview and outline up front is very helpful, particularly if you mention the key points at every stage. In the overview, specifics are better than generics ("I'll describe the 15 years of British expenditure data" is more helpful than "then I'll talk about the data").

*Rule 2: "Know more than you say and say more than you write."* Audience members should be able to read slides at a glance so that they are really concentrating on what you say. Too many words on a slide are confusing; if ideas are complex, explain them.

**Other advice –**

- You may use any type of projection screen format (printed slides or electronic), although I strongly recommend that you *use PowerPoint*. It is the most commonly used electronic format at professional meetings and is available in the SSW computer lab.
- *Be selective in presenting methods and findings.* The articles scheduled for presentation contain too many threads to successfully convey in a short presentation, and most rely on methods that you have not yet studied at enough depth to present. It is better to pick one or two charts or graphs and present simplified versions of tables, focusing on the specific importance and meaning of one or a small number of key numbers. For the purpose of this assignment, you can trust the authors' interpretation of the estimated values.
- If there are issues that you'd like to address but cannot fit into the presentation, feel free to *make a final slide that lists suggested discussion topics*. This is a good place to address larger issues such as the importance of the work, its role in the policy process or implied meta-theoretical stances.
- *Read the design suggestions* at [http://catalyst.washington.edu/webbeats/carol\\_powerpoint.html](http://catalyst.washington.edu/webbeats/carol_powerpoint.html). Some choices make presentations much easier to read for all and are particularly recommended for improving access for persons with visual disabilities: sans serif font, 16 point or larger font, and high color contrast between background and text.
- *Rehearse the timing to fit within 20 minutes.* Generally people will interrupt with clarifying questions--those questions and answers are in addition to the 20 minutes.
- I suggest that you *e-mail a copy of your presentation to me and cc yourself* before class. I won't generally look at it until after class, but having multiple copies out in cyberspace is a good safeguard against disk errors. If your schedule permits you to arrive a few minutes early, you can preload your presentation before class and we can make sure everything is working correctly.

## Course Project and Final Paper

**Assignment** - Describe empirical work that answers a policy question on a topic of your choice.

This assignment has two main parts. First, name a policy area and identify a specific policy, defined for now as something done by government. Following the discussion to be started in Week 3, describe the specific policies as types of tools. Second, identify some recent empirical research in this area and describe how this research relates to the social condition, policy action and/or policy outcomes. Focus on three to five empirical articles from peer-reviewed journals.

**Process** - Thinking and clearly communicating research ideas take time. Intermediate products will allow for feedback and reflection during the process. Jen is available for consultation at any time, and peer consultation sessions are planned. Unless otherwise noted, a hard copy of the assignment is due to Jen's box by 4:30 pm on the following schedule.

- Friday 10/21 – Statement of policy topic and preliminary bibliography (4 pages max)
- Friday 11/4 – Description of policy area, preliminary article review (5 pages min)
- Friday 11/18 – Revised policy description and analysis of empirical articles (9 pages min)
- Tuesday 12/13 – Final version of paper due (12-16 pages)

**Paper Details** - Unless otherwise negotiated, all work submitted should be original analysis generated for this assignment. Mechanics, organization and style carry small but significant weight. Final papers should be between 12 and 16 pages not including references or tables. Use a standard 12 point font such as Times Roman or Arial (*not* Courier or Bookman, please). Double-space text and leave margins of at least an inch on all sides. Any consistently-applied citation style is fine although you should strive to master the format used in a journal in which you aspire to publish. Students are *strongly advised to use Endnote* or a comparable bibliographic program. Number pages and staple in the upper left hand corner.

### Other advice -

- You may chose to limit your coverage of empirical research to part of the condition-action-outcome framework, for instance only research about policy outcomes. As the focus of this course is on policy, research that describes a social condition without reference to policy intervention is insufficient.
- Avoid “Law-and-Act-itus”, that is listing specific laws rather than describing meaning of policy structure.
- Beware being overwhelmed by too much information. This is not intended to be an exhaustive review of all research on a topic, but rather a thoughtful presentation of how a selection of empirical research contributes to understanding. Focus on articles that have appeared in peer-reviewed journals (see class website for a guide).
- Beware being stalled by too little information. If you have a narrowly-defined interest or are looking at a specific population, there may be little recent research. If this is the case, think about your interest as one example of a more general policy area. Then look for research done in that more general area. Note areas in which there appear to be problematic gaps in the literature.
- As your paper evolves, it may be helpful to keep in mind that the bulk of this assignment is not about a policy per se. Rather, it is an assignment about research that answers a policy question. The most successful papers will clearly reflect this focus.