Social Welfare Policy
PSC 72500 // SOC 85700 // WSCP 81000
3 credits
Professor Janet Gornick
Fall 2012

Wednesday 2:00pm to 4:00pm
Room 5382

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Faculty: Janet Gornick
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Office Hours: Wednesday 4:00pm to 5:00pm, or by appointment.
Call or email with questions at any time.

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Course Description:

This course will examine social welfare policy in the United States, in both 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. We will read two recent books, one an overview of welfare state development, retrenchment and restructuring, with an emphasis on the U.S. in comparative perspective, and one on the increasing assumption of risk by American families.

Third, we will analyze contemporary challenges in three crucial areas of social policy in the U.S.: combating poverty, developing the workforce, and supporting needs for “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. We will focus on policies aimed at reducing inequality and poverty, shoring up low-wage work, and supporting working families.

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Course Requirements:

- four 2-page summaries of class readings    15% of grade
  choose four classes in Sections II, III, IV; details to be provided in class
- attendance, class participation, and supervision of one class session    15% of grade
- mid-term exam (October 17, in class)       30% of grade
- final exam                                 40% of grade

Required Reading:

These six books are required reading. I recommend that you buy all six them.‡

You should be able to purchase the whole set for about $167 (plus shipping) – or much less, if you buy used versions.

(1) For September 19.
   What is Social Policy: Understanding the Welfare State
   Daniel Béland, 2010
   Polity Press
   Available from Amazon, $22.95

(2) For October 3.
   The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Security and the Decline of the American Dream
   Oxford University Press
   Available from Amazon, $9.75

(3) For October 24, October 31, and November 7.
   Changing Poverty, Changing Policies
   Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (Eds.), 2009
   Russell Sage Foundation Press
   Available from Amazon, $36.17

(4) For November 14.
   For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States
   Nancy Folbre (Ed.), 2012
   Russell Sage Foundation Press
   Available from Amazon, $35.00.

(5) For November 28.
   Low-Wage Work in the Wealthy World
   Jérôme Gautié and John Schmitt (Eds.), 2010
   Russell Sage Foundation Press
   Available from Amazon, $45.00

(6) For December 5.
   Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment
   Russell Sage Foundation Press
   Available from Amazon, $17.53

‡ These books have been placed on reserve at the Mina Rees Library.
Course Overview:

I. Introduction and Historical Overview
- August 29 Class #1 Introduction to the Course
- September 5 Class #2 Historical Perspectives I: From 1601 to 1930
- September 12 Class #3 Historical Perspectives II: From 1930 to the Early 2000s

- September 19 Class #4 The U.S. in Comparative Perspective
- September 26 – NO CLASS
- October 3 Class #5 The New Economic Insecurity
- October 10 – NO CLASS
- October 17 Class #6 MIDTERM EXAM (in class)

III. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Contemporary Challenges
- October 24 Class #7 Combating Poverty – Economic Changes, Demographic Changes, and Trends
- October 31 Class #8 Combating Poverty – U.S. Policy Approaches
- November 7 Class #9 Developing the Workforce
- November 14 Class #10 Supporting “Care”

IV. Policy Lessons from Other High-Income Countries
- November 21 Class #11 Reducing Poverty and Inequality
- November 28 Class #12 Shoring up Low-Wage Work
- December 5 Class #13 Supporting Working Families

V. Conclusions
- December 12 Class #14 Wrapping Up
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 29 Class #1 Introduction to the Course

September 5 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 12 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 19 Class #4 The U.S. in Comparative Perspective
Reading: What is Social Policy: Understanding the Welfare State
Daniel Béland
2010
Polity Press

October 3 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 17 Class #6 MIDTERM EXAM
III. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Contemporary Challenges

October 24 Class #7 Combating Poverty – Economic Changes, Demographic Changes, and Trends
Reading: Changing Poverty, Changing Policies
Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (Eds.)
2009
Russell Sage Foundation Press
Chapter 1 Changing Poverty and Changing Antipoverty Policies
Chapter 2 Poverty Levels and Trends in Comparative Perspective
Chapter 4 Family Structure, Childbearing, and Parental Employment:
Implications for the Level and Trend in Poverty

October 31 Class #8 Combating Poverty – U.S. Policy Approaches
Reading: Changing Poverty, Changing Policies
Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (Eds.)
2009
Russell Sage Foundation Press
Chapter 8 Trends in Income Support
Chapter 13 Poverty Politics and Policy
Chapter 12 Health Care for the Poor:
For Whom, What Care, and Whose Responsibility?

November 7 Class #9 Developing the Workforce
Reading: Changing Poverty, Changing Policies
Maria Cancian and Sheldon Danziger (Eds.)
2009
Russell Sage Foundation Press
Chapter 3 Economic Change and the Structure of Opportunity for Less-Skilled Workers
Chapter 5 Immigration and Poverty in the United States (optional)
Chapter 10 Improving Educational Outcomes for Poor Children
Chapter 11 Workforce Development as an Antipoverty Strategy:
What Do We Know? What Should We Do?

November 14 Class #10 Supporting “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 21 Class #11 Reducing Poverty and Inequality
(to be distributed in pdf)
November 28  Class #12  **Shoring up Low-Wage Work**

**Reading:**  
*Low-Wage Work in the Wealthy World*  
Jérôme Gautié and John Schmitt (Eds.)  
2010  
Russell Sage Foundation Press  
Chapter 1  Introduction and Overview  
Chapter 2  Low-Wage Work and National Labor Market Institutions  
Chapter 3  Industrial Relations, Legal Regulations, and Wage-Setting  
Chapter 4  The Impact of Institutions on the Supply Side of the Low-Wage Labor Market

December 5  Class #13  **Supporting Working Families**

**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 12  Class #14  **Wrapping Up**