PMAP 8010: Social Policy
Spring 2015
Classroom South 503
Monday, 4:30-7:00pm

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(404)413-0118
Room 327 Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:45-5:15pm and by appointment

Course Description
PMAP 8010 serves as a broad introduction to social policy in the United States. The course focuses on the theoretical, ideological and practical explanations of policy problems and alternative social policy choices, and delves into specialized topics in the contemporary social policy discourse, including education, poverty and welfare, health, housing, and crime. The course readings include journal articles, selected book chapters, and other published work.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes
In this course, students will:
• Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical and practical principles of social policy in the United States.
• Develop an understanding of the relationships among political institutions, office holders, and societal norms and ideals in shaping social policy decisions.
• Enhance professional and research writing skills.

Required Texts:

Suggested Texts:

Policies

Class Attendance and Participation
Class attendance and participation will count for 15 percent of your final grade. One class can be missed without penalty, but additionally missed sessions will be documented and deducted. Continual tardiness to class or early departures from class will also result in deductions from the final grade. Inattentiveness, inadequate preparation, and/or disruptive behavior in class will be penalized and reflected in the final grade as well. As a general rule, there are no exceptions to the attendance requirement; however, exceptions may be granted for a catastrophic event or illness with documentation.
**Late Assignments**
Assignments submitted to the professor after they have been collected in class or after stated deadlines will be counted as late. *Late assignments must be hand delivered to the professor.* Turning in assignments late will result in a full letter grade deduction and a 3-point deduction for each additional day. No assignment will be accepted one week beyond the indicated deadline.

**Make-Up Exams**
In general, make-up exams will only be allowed under emergency circumstances with proper documentation.

**Class Etiquette**
To make this course enjoyable for everyone, cell phone ringers and other devices should be turned off. Text messaging, emailing, and surfing the web are prohibited in class. If it appears that members of the class are using computers or tablets for purposes outside of note taking, the instructor reserves the right to ask students to take notes by hand.

In this course, we will be discussing a host of social issues that are sensitive and often controversial. Our individual experiences and backgrounds provide us all with a valuable point of reference from which to be our exploration of the concepts and topics. No one has a monopoly on social issues or concepts; therefore, no one’s point of reference is more or less legitimate than anyone else’s reference point. Every substantive contribution to class discussion is considered invaluable and will not be censored. However, contributions that are not deemed substantive or are distracting in nature will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be respectful to the professor and peers. Students may have strong opinions on topics and classroom discussion can be lively; the professor encourages students to voice their opinions and views in a courteous manner.

**Tips for Maintaining Proper Discussion Etiquette**

1. **Listen attentively.** The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
2. **Think before you speak.** Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
3. **Maintain the dignity of the academic environment.** Your ideas should be presented using Standard English.
4. **Raise your hand.** This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
5. **Be courteous.** Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

**Email**
The instructor will periodically communicate with students through the campus email system; therefore, students are responsible for checking their campus assigned email account regularly. Additionally, students may communicate with the instructor through this system. Please allow 48 hours before sending follow up emails. Emails sent through Brightspace may experience a delayed response.
**Plagiarism, Academic Honesty or Cheating**

The Georgia State University Handbook defines plagiarism as follows:

- Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgement, including the summarizing of another student’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. *It is also plagiarism to reuse material you prepared for different courses in the same program*. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

In this course, plagiarism and academic dishonesty will include the following:

- Reusing material developed for other courses to meet writing assignments in the current course.
- Collaborating with other students or outside consultants (i.e. professional editor) for writing assignments without permission or prompting.
- Copying information or ideas from a book, article, or website without proper credit to the author.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty in any form will face disciplinary action that could result in receiving a “F” in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

More information about the GSU Academic Honesty Policy (Section 409) can be found here: [http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html). Students may also find information on the policy in the undergraduate catalog.

**Course Materials/Copyright Statement**

The handouts used in this course—including but not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, and in class materials generated for the course are copyrighted. You do not have permission or the right to copy the handouts unless I expressly grant you permission.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement**

Students with disabilities, requiring special accommodation must self identify and need to be registered with the Office of Disability Services (404-651-1487) for the instructor to modify instruction or expectation. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a *signed Accommodation Plan* and are responsible for providing a copy of the plan to the professor and all other courses in which an accommodation is sought.

**PMAP Career Services and Community Network**

The Department of Public Management and Policy (PMAP) provides career support services to all current PMAP students and alumni. To examine what PMAP offers to its students regarding career development, visit: [PMAP Career Services](#). Students are encouraged to arrange an individualized appointment with Colleen Perry, Andrew Young School Director of Career Services, by emailing her at: cperry25@gsu.edu. Her office is located in room 49B on the Ground Floor of the Andrew Young School.
Course Evaluation
Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at GSU. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

Grading Policy: The following point system will be used to calculate final grade. Incomplete grades will only be given for nonacademic reasons when advance arrangements have been made. Please let the professor know as soon as you see a problem developing. The professor reserves the right to require documentation and proof of the need for an incomplete before agreeing to apply the “I” grade; the right to assign different and/or additional course requirements; the right to impose a grade penalty for an incomplete in the course. Students should familiarize themselves with the GSU Withdrawal Policies, Section 401.05.

Last day to withdraw from full semester classes: March 3, 2015.

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Assignments

Writing Assignments: (20% of total grade) Students will write weekly short papers (2 pages max) on the reading assigned for the week. Papers should be formatted in 12point, Times New Roman font, double spaced, with one inch margins. Not following the formatting requirements will result in points being deducted from the assignment. Papers should be submitted on Brightspace before 10:00pm on the day before class.

- **Week 3-6:** Students will write discussion papers summarizing and critiquing the major themes and theories of the assigned readings. The paper should include a discussion of the arguments presented in the reading, a critique of the theories, and a minimum of three questions to advance, improve, or challenge the readings.

- **Week 8-14:** Students will write mini policy briefs discussing the social policy topic of the week. Briefs should include a summary of the policy(s); explanations of the policy issue offered in the readings and their substantive importance, a theoretical argument supporting or critiquing the explanations and at least three policy recommendations or considerations. Some research briefs will be substituted for data analysis at the instructor’s discretion.

Current Events Assessment: (10% of total grade) Beginning in Week 8, groups of two to three students will provide a 10-15 minute presentation of a current policy event happening in the news media or academic community related to the social policy topic of the week. The students will summarize the article and issue, explain the issue’s link to past or current readings, discuss the effect or implications of the issue, offer a set of solutions or policy recommendations, and prepare a minimum of three discussion questions or points (that you can answer) for class discussion. A Powerpoint is not required, but recommended. Students should also be prepared to discuss counter perspectives of the selected news or research article.
Policy Research Project: (35% of total grade) Students are required to conduct an original group research project on a social policy problem. Students will self-select into groups of three or four, depending on the final enrollment in the course, and work together to choose a social policy topic. The research project has three components. **Written components should be submitted on Brightspace on or before the noted due date.**

- **Research Proposal: (5% of total grade)** First, groups will write a brief (2-4 pages) research design or proposal, outlining the nature of their social policy problem. The design should introduce the research question related to the policy issue being addressed; provide a short history of the policy and supporting literature demonstrating how others have approached the issue or question; include the group’s stance, explanation, and proposed solution to the social policy problem. This design will serve as an outline for the second component. **Due February 16, 2015.**

- **Research Paper Outline (5% of total grade)** Students will submit a detailed outline of their research paper. The outline should include the major sections of the report—research question, history, literature overview, stance, and recommendation—as well as appropriate subheadings. Each heading and subheading requires a brief statement (1-4 sentences) explaining the content of the section. **Due March 23, 2015.**

- **Policy Report: (15% of total grade)** Third, each group of students will write a paper that expands the research proposal. The paper poses a research question about a policy problem and the development of the policy problem; it discusses how the policy problem has been approached by others in the literature, including critics. The paper provides a critical analysis of policy choices related to problem with supporting theories or evidence, and makes a set of policy recommendations. The paper must be between 15 and 25 pages in length (double-spaced), including proper citations and references. **Due April 20, 2015.**

- **Presentation: (5% of total grade)** Fourth, students will complete a presentation of the research findings. Student groups will be randomly assigned to present during the final three weeks of the course. Presentations must be no more than 20 minutes in length plus 10 minutes to address questions from fellow students. Each group must prepare Powerpoint slides (or equivalent) that outline the presentation. Powerpoints should be submitted to the instructor before or immediately after the presentation. Late penalty policy will be applied to any Powerpoint submitted 24 hours after in-class presentation. Student groups will be assessed on the content and clarity of their presentations, their degree of professionalism and ability to communicate effectively with the instructor and classmates.

- **Peer Evaluation (5% of total grade):** The final component is a peer evaluation. Each student will rate and discuss their teammates’ contribution to the policy report and presentation.

**Final Assessment: (20% of total grade)** – The final course requirement is a comprehensive final assessment.

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**Course Outline and Schedule**

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• **Week 1, January 12: What is Social Policy?**
  - No readings

• **Week 2, January 19: MLK Holiday, No Class**

• **Week 3, January 27: Theories of Public Policy**
  - **Suggested Readings**

• **Week 4, February 2: Understanding the Policy Process**
  - **Suggested Readings**

• **Week 5, February 9: Politics of Social Policy I**
  - **Suggested Readings**

**Week 6, February 16: Politics of Social Policy II**
- Wilson, W.J. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy. Chapters 5-6.

**Suggested Readings**

**Week 7, February 23: Writing Workshop Week**

**Week 8, March 2: Education Policy**

**Suggested Readings**

**Week 9, March 9: Higher Education Policy**


Suggested Readings

Week 10, March 16: Spring Break, No Class

Week 11, March 23: Health Policy

Suggested Readings

Week 12, March 30: Inequality and Poverty

Suggested Readings
- Kearney, M., Benjamin Harris, Elisa Jácome, and Lucie Parker. 2013. "A Dozen Facts about America's Struggling Lower-Middle Class." The Hamilton Project. **


Suggested Readings


Week 13, April 6: Inequality, Poverty, and Welfare Policy


Week 14, April 13: Crime and Law Enforcement


Week 15, April 20: Presentations

- Final Papers Due

Week 16, April 27: Presentations/Catch Up and Course Wrap Up

- Take Home Assessment Assigned

Week 17- May 4, Final Exam

- In Class Submission of Final Assessment
- Presentations (if needed)

*The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. Students will be alerted of any changes.

**Article or report found on Brightspace page.