Course Description

Students in this three-credit course analyze and explore the nature, extent, and demographics of contemporary poverty, together with major policy and program responses to poverty. The course will examine populations most at risk of poverty, the dynamics of poverty, and trends in poverty rates over time. Attention will also be given to the types of anti-poverty programs that have been implemented since 1935 that underscores the extent of disagreement about the causes of poverty, the situation of the poor, and the role of the government in encouraging income redistribution and social change.

Prerequisites

Students enrolled in this course must have doctoral student standing and/or signed permission of the instructor.

Specific Course Goals and Objectives

The primary objective of this seminar is to increase students’ ability to critically analyze current social welfare policies in the context of poverty in the United States. Moreover, seminar participants will acquire an understanding of selected current U.S. social policies and improve their fluency in writing about and discussing social welfare policy issues and related research.

The goals of the social work doctoral program include preparing students to make contributions to the profession as researchers, scholars, and educators. Toward this end, the objectives of this course include students demonstrating the following:

- Demonstrate a general understanding of the policy process and social welfare;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between poverty and race;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of research and policy analysis;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the application of qualitative and quantitative research methodology for addressing policy relevant questions;
- Demonstrate an ability to frame policy relevant research questions and conclusions.
Course Content

This single course only begins to cover the range of substantive areas in social welfare policy. The topics covered in this class and in student presentations will serve as examples of social welfare policies and approaches to reducing the incidence of poverty and the analysis of poverty policy. We will consider conceptual and technical issues in the measurement of poverty and the implications of demographic change for social welfare policy. The policies and problem areas covered are central to social welfare policy, but are not comprehensive. However, the theories and techniques considered are applicable across problem areas.

Course Requirements

As a doctoral seminar, it is expected that students will take an active role in their own learning process and in that of their peers. Therefore, it is expected that readings will be completed in a timely fashion and that students will participate appropriately in class meetings. All papers will be presented and discussed in class, on a schedule to be determined. Students are responsible for either e-mailing copies to the instructor and the rest of the class.

Student grades in this course are based on the following criteria:

Written Policy Brief ................................................................. 40%
Oral presentation of policy brief...............................................................10%
Weekly Critiques.................................................................40%
Class participation (includes written questions ................................10%

concerning papers by other students)

PLEASE NOTE: Except under exceptionally extenuating circumstances, grades for papers will be automatically reduced by one-half grade point for each day they are late.

Policy Briefing and Presentation

A policy brief on one aspect of social welfare policy will be required. There will be no final exam.

Scenario

Your boss, a newly elected representative (or a newly appointed executive branch official) has asked for a briefing on your selected topic. You can assume that she/he has an informed newspaper reader’s grasp of the topic, but may know very little of the details of current policy. If your boss is a legislator, assume he/she is particularly interested in alternative policies that require legislative action; if an executive branch official, assume she/he is particularly interested in the implementation of existing legislation. (Obviously, you select your boss according to where the action is or needs to be regarding your topic). Your boss has asked for several briefings, so has limited time for each topic: 25 minutes maximum, of which at least 5 minutes should be set aside for questions. Because of the tight timeframe, you may want to use visual aids of some sort to provide more information than can be presented verbally.
Begin your presentation by informing us if you are reporting to a national, state, or local official, and if you are reporting to someone in the legislative or executive branch. You will be evaluated on your coverage of the following four questions:

1. What is the social problem underlying the social policy area, and why is it important?
2. What are the current policies?
3. What are their advantages and disadvantages?
4. What are some alternative policies?

All policy briefs will be presented and discussed in class, on a schedule to be determined. Students are responsible for either e-mailing copies (using D2L) to the instructor and the rest of the class. In preparation for the presentations, the other students in the class are required to submit, in writing, five questions for every policy brief on the day it is presented to the class. The school faculty will be invited to hear your presentations.

As an aid to students, an annotated bibliography is also required. The annotated bibliography will be graded as a part of the final policy briefing.

**Weekly Critiques**

Complete 4 weekly critiques of the readings. Reading critiques should be ten pages maximum (double spaced), Times Roman, 12 point font, and one-inch margins and about half devoted to integrative summary comments (demonstrating familiarity with all the required readings for the week), and about half to critical responses or questions. Given 12 weeks of readings (except for the first class) each student may skip 7 weeks. For credit, critiques should be received by the instructor and your fellow classmates as an e-mail attachment via D2L no later than 6 pm Monday.

Students consistently completing the assignments at the expected graduate level will receive a final grade of A-. Students completing outstanding assignments will receive an A. Students generally completing assignments, but not consistently meeting graduate level standards, will receive a B. Students who do not complete 6 critiques will receive one-half less than the grade earned for the critiques that are submitted.

**Texts/Required Reading Sources**


Supplemental Reading:
Students with long-term research interests in the area of poverty and welfare will find it useful to become familiar with all of the readings. The majority of these books might also be useful to acquire and read (some are all available for purchase through [Hyperlink](http://www.amazon.com) or thorough inter-library loan from the University of Wisconsin library system.


**University Policies**

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has developed policies related to a variety of areas that are pertinent to the success of a students’ academic career. The Secretary of the University Website ([HYPERLINK](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf) describes the following University policies on:

- Students with disabilities
- Religious observances
- Students called to active military duty
- Incompletes:
- Discriminatory conduct:
- Academic Misconduct:
- Complaint procedures:
- Grade Appeal procedures:
- Other: The final exam requirements, the final exam date requirement, etc.

**Learning Environment**

Students may utilize the computer lab of the Schools of Enderis (1044 Enderis) while registered for this course. The primary method of communication with the class will be through the D2L website for the class. Information regarding participation by students with disabilities, accommodations for religious observances, academic conduct/misconduct, incomplete grading policies, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, sexual harassment and safety policies, and other standing policies/procedures is available either in the doctoral student handbook, the campus website (www.uwm.edu), or ask at the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare reception desk (11th floor Enderis).

**Class Schedule**

**Week One – January 25, 2012**

Introduction – Course overview, including of paper topics, student responsibilities, grading, and introductory discussion of poverty and welfare issues.

Readings:

Lamont, Michelle and Mario Luis Smalls. “Cultural diversity and anti-poverty policy.” (unpublished document)

**Week Two – February 1, 2012**
Definitions and Boundaries of Social Welfare Policy (Poverty focused)

Reading: Iceland, Chapters 1-2, 7
Wolff, Chapter 15 “Public Policy and Poverty Alleviation” (Handout)

**Week Three – February 8, 2012**
Race and ethnicity - The classic report written for the sole purpose of internal discussion under the President Johnson administration but was leaked to the public and caused a major discussion on family structure, race, and its correlation to poverty.

Readings:
**Report:**
**The Negro Family:**
The Case For National Action
Office of Policy Planning and Research
United States Department of Labor
March 1965 (Daniel Patrick Monyihan)

**Week Four – February 15, 2012**
Poverty Theories


Cultural/Behavioral Models
Readings:

Institutional/Structural Models
Readings:
Week 5 – February 22, 2012
Poverty Measurement
Measuring Poverty – The decision about who is poor and who is not poor is important. The current debate on the definition of poverty embodies a set of assumptions about what constitutes economic need. Furthermore, society (policy-makers) often decide who is or is not eligible for aid by our definition of poverty. Our ability to monitor the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce or eliminate poverty needs academic researchers be able to measure the extent of poverty before and after the interventions.

Chapter 3, Iceland
Wolff. Chapter 4 “Poverty: Definitions and Historical Trends”


U.S. Poverty Measurement:

Supplemental Resource:

Week 6 – February 29, 2012
Family Structure and Poverty


Week Seven - March 7, 2012
Family Structure and Poverty (continued)


Week Eight – March 14, 2012
Who are the Poor?
March 18 - 24  (Spring Break)

**Week Nine – March 27, 2012**
An economist approach to measuring poverty - income inequality and discrimination
Guest Lecturer: Daniel Fuhrmann, Ph.D.
   Associate Scientist (Statistician)
   CABHR

   (Chapter 3) pp. 55-90

   Discrimination: Meaning, Measurement, and Theory (Chapter 12) pp. 419 - 441


**Week Ten - April 4, 2012**
Social Control and Poverty - The classic book by Piven and Cloward critically examines the issues of poverty and "entitlement programs".


**Week Eleven - April 11, 2012**

**Week Twelve - April 18, 2012**
Readings:
The Moynihan Report and Research on the Black Community.
Author: William Julius Wilson pp. 34 - 45
The Labor Market an Young Black Men: Updating Moynihan's Perspective
Author: Harry Holzer pp. 47 - 69
Moynihan was Right: Now What?
Author: Ron Haskins pp. 281 - 314.
Week Thirteen - April 25, 2012

Readings:
Reconsidering Culture and Poverty
Authors: Small, M., D. Harding, and M. Lamont. pp. 6-27
Author: Joshua Guetzkow  pp. 173 - 197.

Week Fourteen - May 2, 2012
Policy Presentations

Week Fifteen - May 9, 2012
Final paper  (Writing Day)