Course Title: Family Policy

Instructor: Dan Hudgins, MSW, ACSW
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Phone (919)962-5163
Office Hours – on request.

Description: Policies affecting American families will be examined to develop a broad understanding of various policy alternatives, their consequences, and the role of social workers as policy advocates.

Objectives: Students will develop knowledge in the following areas:
1. Changing demographics and structure of American families, the definition of social problems, family politics, benefits, and services.
2. The role of social theory and values in shaping policy alternatives and outcomes.
3. Social policy provisions designed to support American families and resulting social provisions.
4. The impact of poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination on family policies, benefits, and services.
5. The multiple and often contradictory ideological, fiscal, and organizational contexts in which benefits and services are developed and delivered.
6. Analytic, theoretical and value assessment skills that enable social workers to evaluate family policies and programs.
7. Family policy, benefits, and services from an international perspective, comparing the U.S. system with other countries.
8. Importance of family policy to the mission and practice of social work.
9. The role of social workers in influencing the development and implementation of family policy.

Required Texts:
(hereafter referred to in the syllabus ad DBG).


Selected articles on reserve, via internet or provided in class (*).

**January 16**  
Introduction and Review of Social Welfare Policy

**January 23**  
Child Welfare

**Required Readings:**


Provide in Class

**Special Interest Assignments:**

**SE 13**, Should Lesbian and Gay Individuals Be Allowed to Adopt Children?

**January 30**  
Welfare Reform

**Review Case Assignment #4**

Testimony of Sharon Parrott, CBPP Director of Welfare Reform and Income Support Policy, on the Impact of TANF Ten Years After Implementation
http://www.cbpp.org/7-19-06tanf-testimony.pdf

Conduct a web search on current demographic trends affecting the American Family that you are interested in. Bring information to class.

**Special Interest Assignment:**
SE Issue 3, Does Divorce Create Long-Term Negative Effects for Children?

**February 6**

**Child Care**

**Required Readings:**

Child Care Services Association (2006) *Who’s Caring for Our Babies? A Profile of Early Care and Education for Children Birth to Three in North Carolina*
http://www.childcareservices.org/ Look under Research and Studies

**Special Interest Assignments:**
SE Issue 5, Do Mothers Who Work Outside of the Home Have a Negative Effect on Their Children?

Guest Speaker: Representative of Child Care Services Association

**February 13**

**Education**

**Required Readings:**

Read the report cards for two schools in NC that you are interested in: http://www.ncreportcards.org/src/

Conduct a web search and read two different articles, one “pro” and one “con” on the No Child Left Behind Act.

**Special Interest Assignments:**
SE Issue 6, Should “Abstinence-Until Marriage” Be the Only Message for Teens?
February 20

Domestic Violence

Required Readings:


Speaker: Guest Speaker

February 27

Health Policy

Written Assignment 1 Due

Required Readings:


Readings from current debate on health policy to be identified in class.

Special Interest Assignments:
SE Issue 10, Should Minors Be Required to Get Their Parents’ Permission in Order to Obtain an Abortion?

March 6

Child Mental Health and Disability Policies
Policies and Programs for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Required Readings:


March 20

Aging

Required Readings:
To be assigned in class prior to March 7.

Class Presentations on Assignment 3
March 27  

**Juvenile Justice**

*Required Readings:*


*Class Presentations on Assignment 3*

April 3  

**International Family Policy**

The UK Commitment: Ending Child Poverty by 2020,  
Center for Law and Social Policy,  

Review the Website of The Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University. Be prepared to discuss one of the benefits comparing the provision of these benefits from an international perspective.  

*Class Presentations on Assignment 3*

April 17  

**The Role of Advocates in Public Policy**

**DBG. Chapter Thirteen. Building a Common Agenda: Charting a Social Policy Agenda for People of Color. pp. 219-227.**  

Guest Speaker: A Lobbyist or Legislative Staff Person

April 24  

**Class Presentations on Assignment 4**

Final Exam – Take Home: Due May 1
Written Assignment No. 1

Due Date: February 27, 2009

Identify a particular family issue, problem or policy of your choice, and write a 500 word OP-ED piece that might be submitted to a newspaper for publication. (Issues that are presented in the Taking Sides/Controversial Issues texts may not be used.) This issue should, however, be timely. It might address a problem at the local, state or national level. Examples could include boot camps for adolescents, an alternative school in a local community, or incarcerating mothers of young children. In the 500 words, you should “grab” the audience with a case example or statistic, provide background on the issue and propose a solution.

5 extra points can be earned by having the piece published in a local newspaper of your choice.

The following will be used as criteria in grading the Opinion/Editorial piece:

1.) Op/ed makes a strong, compelling argument. (40%)
2.) Op/ed is well organized and provides a sequential argument. (40%)
3.) Writing structure, spelling and grammar are correct. (20%)

Class Presentation and Written Assignment No. 2

Due Date: Depending on sign-up sheet

1.) In pairs, present both sides of the selected issue to the class. To conclude, use the components of the “Questions to Ask When Examining a Position” handout to analyze the positions of the authors. Prepare two-three discussion questions for the class. Lead the class in a discussion of the issues. (Presentation and discussion should take 20-25 minutes).

2.) Individually, write a four-five-page paper that examines both perspectives of the issue that you have selected. Summarize the major theses of the “Yes” and “No” sides. For each side, answer the questions outlined in the “Questions to Ask When Examining a Position” article. To conclude, use empirical evidence to justify and state your own position.

3.) Paper is due on date of presentation.

The following will be used as criteria in grading the Taking Sides/Controversial Issues assignment:

- The content of the presentation accurately summarizes the views of the two authors. (20%)
The discussion questions used in class were appropriate to the issue and stimulated discussion from the audience. (30%)
The content of the written paper succinctly summarized both sides of the considered issue. (20%)
The paper concludes with the student’s discussion of their own position, utilizing empirical evidence to justify the position. (20%)
The document is well-written, demonstrating basic mastery of sentence structure, with no spelling or typing errors. (10%).

Oral Presentation and Written Assignment No. 3

Due Date: Depending on sign-up sheet

1.) Submit written testimony in support or opposition to pending legislation or an administrative policy. By February 1 identify an issue that interests you. Engage in research regarding your selected issue. For example, who has proposed this change? What is the status of the proposal? You are encouraged to contact direct sources that are working on the issue to acquire additional information. The testimony should be two pages long and must include the following:
   a) Bill number and title or the administrative reference, b) Your position on the proposal, c) Reasons for your position, d) Talking points, include evidence and experience to support the stated position, and e) Summation of your main points and recommendations.

2.) As a part of the testimony, you will be required to engage in a mock oral testimony. Your classmates will have an opportunity to raise questions with you about your testimony as they will be performing the role of a legislative committee or administrative body that is holding a hearing on the proposal.

Written testimony is due on date of presentation.

10 extra points can be earned by providing oral testimony before a state legislative committee or administrative body.

Class Presentations and Written Assignment No. 4

Due Date: April 24, 2009
1.) Team research papers, including executive summaries will be submitted on the assigned policy area. The paper is to be a minimum of 20 pages (exclusive of title page, appendices and citations). It should be typewritten and double spaced.

Please select a specific, significant, problematic policy issue that affects the delivery of services. The policy issue can be a specific policy formulated at the federal or state level, or can be a specific issue which has been created by a number of intersecting policies. The selected policy issue should be of sufficient magnitude that its impact can be traced through the scholarly and advocacy literature. The paper should incorporate concepts from your course readings and outside research. The paper may also include summaries of local experts on the policy challenge. The paper should:

- Identify the policy issue with specificity, and summarize its importance and why you see it as problematic.
- Discuss the assumptions and values underlying the policy issue.
- Present the historical context in which the policy issue developed citing any laws, cases or orders that contributed to its creation. Analyze the groups, organizations, or types of people who were (or are) involved in the debate about the policy issue and their positions.
- Describe the impact (positive/negative) of the policy issue on clients, practitioners and service systems. This should include discussion of the policy’s impact on individuals and families of varied race, ethnic origin, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and other factors of difference.
- Describe how a risk and resilience perspective seemingly has or has not been considered as an aspect of the policy development.
- Conclude with recommendations and rationale for change to the policy that you would make as a social work professional, and a specific strategy for how a social worker(s) might make this policy change.
- Throughout the paper cite all sources in APA format.

The following will be used as criteria for grading the Research Paper:

- The content of the paper includes all relevant elements outlined above. (35%).
- The document is well-written, demonstrating basic mastery of sentence structure, with no spelling or typing errors and using APA (10%).
- Source materials for the research are sufficient and appropriate to the subject analyzed (15%).
- Issues of diversity are addressed (10%).
- Discussion of risk and resilience perspective is included (10%).
- Analytical, critical, and original thinking about the policy issue and change strategies are demonstrated. This would include a logically structured argument, cohesive and well-synthesized use of the literature, and some original thinking that is identified as your own interpretation and goes beyond the literature (20%).

2.) Teams will participate in mock oral testimony before a “legislative committee” regarding a current policy issue facing your policy area. Your testimony should
To be maximally effective, you should have some sort of visuals/handouts as part of your presentation. You will have 45 minutes to make the presentation and 30 minutes to answer questions from the committee.

Coaching on this format will be provided during class on January 25.

Grading criteria for this assignment will be based on:

- The content of the presentation includes all relevant elements as outlined above. (35%).
- The position taken in the presentation is well thought out and justified by supporting information, demonstrating analytic and critical thinking (35%).
- The written visuals/handouts are well-written, effective and succinct (30%).

Attendance/Class Participation/Written Assignments

Attendance:

Attendance is crucial to both your learning experience and the learning of your peers. Students are expected to attend all sessions and to be on time. It is your responsibility to notify the instructor in advance if you will miss class.

Participation:

Participation by each student is essential; the responsibility for class discussion is shared by the instructor and the students. Class participation includes being prepared to discuss readings and assignments, sharing opinions and insights and providing follow-up discussion on points raised by other class members. Class participation accounts for 15% of the grade. Students are expected to submit one well-considered discussion question, based on the reading to the instructor by noon on the Thursday prior to each Friday Class. These questions are to be submitted by email to danhudgins@unc.edu.

Course Grades

Course grades will be based on performance on six factors: 1) Class attendance and contribution to class discussion, 2.) A brief written OP-ED piece on a particular issue, 3) Presentation and five-page paper regarding an issue from Taking Sides, 4) Oral and written testimony, 5.) An oral team debate and paper and the Final Exam. The following weights will be assigned to the above efforts in assigning course grades:
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<th>15% of grade</th>
<th>Class attendance, contribution to class discussion, discussion questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>10% of grade</td>
<td>Written Assignment One</td>
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<td>20% of grade</td>
<td>Class Presentation and Written Assignment Two</td>
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<td>20% of grade</td>
<td>Oral and Written Testimony Assignment Three</td>
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<td>20% of grade</td>
<td>Group Paper and Presentation</td>
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<td>15% of grade</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Honor Code**

Students are expected to complete assigned and independent readings, contribute to the development of a positive learning environment, and demonstrate their learning through written assignments and class participation. Original written work is expected and required.

It is the responsibility of every student to:

- Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student or academic personnel acting in an official capacity;
- Conduct all academic work within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code, which prohibits the giving or receiving of unauthorized aid in all academic processes.

To review a complete copy of the Honor Code (formally known as the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance*); please refer to the *Record of Graduate School Handbook*. It is also available from the Judicial Programs Office, 06 Steele Building, or online at [http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html](http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html).

All written work must be accompanied by a signed Honor Code statement, and work lacking this affirmation will not be accepted. The statement is to read as follows:

*I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.*

*<Student Signature>*
Accessibility

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations, students with disabilities must contact the instructor and the Department of Disability Services as soon as possible. You may reach the Department of Disability Services at 919-962-8300 (Voice/TDD) or http://disabilityservices.unc.edu.

Course Evaluation

A Mid-Term evaluation will be conducted to provide the instructor with feedback from students on how the course is meeting their needs. A final course evaluation will be conducted using the standing policies of the School of Social Work.