

**Social Policy**  
PAUS 8010  
Spring 2009

Professor: Eric C. Twombly  
Office Phone: 404.968.8006  
Email: Etwombly@gsu.edu  
Office: Andrew Young School Building, Room G49B  
Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:15pm-4:15pm or by appointment  
Class location: Classroom South, Room 508  
Class time: Wednesdays, 4:30-7:00pm

**Course Description**

This course 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 contemporary social policy discourse, including poverty and welfare, housing, and crime. The course readings include journal articles, selected book chapters, and other published work.

**Course Objectives**

The course has three objectives:

- Students will develop a strong understanding of theoretical and practical principles of U.S. social policy.
- Students will learn the extent to which political and societal factors impact the choices of policymakers in social policy arenas.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of course materials through several class requirements.

**Course Requirements**

- Each student must complete the required readings as scheduled and on time.
- Each student must actively participate in class discussions. The success of the course depends in part on a high degree of student participation.
- Each student must complete a research project that critically analyzes a social policy problem. Details of the project are provided below.
- Each student will be evaluated on his or her performance on a research project that includes a presentation to the class and a paper; a mid-term examination; a take-home final examination; and class participation. The weights for grades and a description of how final grades will be calculated are provided below.

<b>Grade Weights</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mid-term examination	30
Research presentation	15
Research paper	15
Final examination:	30
<u>Class participation:</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	100

### **Grade Calculations**

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Grade	Overall numeric score
A+	97.00 – 100.00
A	93.00 – 96.99
A-	90.00 – 92.99
B+	87.00 – 89.99
B	83.00 – 86.99
B-	80.00 – 82.99
C+	77.00 – 79.99
C	73.00 – 76.99
C-	70.00 – 72.99
D	60.00 – 69.99
F	<60.00

### **Course readings and uLearn**

Students will be required to read the articles, chapters, and papers noted below. All works will be available on uLearn, a web-based system at Georgia State University. For this course, uLearn will also contain include the syllabus, presentation slides to guide the course lectures, and information on the research project. All students must have appropriate GSU log-on information to use uLearn.

### **Research Project**

Students are required to conduct an original joint research project on a social policy problem. Students will pair into groups of two and work together to choose a social policy topic. Students must clear their topics with me no later than February 4, 2009 (fifth class of the semester).

The research project has two components. First, each pair of students will write a paper that poses a research question about a policy problem, discusses how that policy problem has been approached by others in the literature, provides a critical analysis of policy choices related to problem, and makes a set of policy recommendations. The paper must be between 20 and 30 pages in length (double-spaced), including proper citations and references. The paper is due to me by email or in person no later than 5pm on April 29, 2009. Note that specific guidance on how to formulate the project and write the research paper is provided on uLearn.

The second project component is a presentation of the research findings. Student pairs will be randomly assigned to present on April 1, April 15, or April 22. Presentations must be no more than 15 minutes in length plus 10 minutes to address questions from fellow students. Each student pair must prepare Powerpoint slides (or equivalent) that outline the presentation and distribute the slides to me and the other students in the class by email at least one day before the presentation. Student pairs will be assessed on the content of their presentations and their degree of professionalism and ability to communicate effectively with their classmates.

### **Course Philosophy and Policies**

- Treat your colleagues and the instructor with respect, sensitivity, and openness to new and varied ideas. Be tolerant of differences in opinion and preferences and use these differences as an opportunity for learning.
- Distractive practices, such as tardy entrances, leaving the room while class is in session, ringing and beeping cell phones, excessive conversation with other students, leaving to get food, eating food, and conducting activities unrelated to class discussions are considered inappropriate behavior.
- Absences. I take very seriously our time in class, and I expect your attendance, preparedness, and full participation. Thus, unexcused absences will severely and negatively impact your grade for class participation. All matters related to absences, including the making up of missed work, are to be arranged between you and the instructor.
- Late Policy. Each student is required to complete assignments, including examinations, on time. I may grant extensions of time to complete assignments if due cause is established. If applicable, please discuss with me your need for extensions of time as soon as possible. Written course requirements (the research paper and take-home final examination) that are submitted to me past their due dates and times will be assessed a full letter-grade penalty, equivalent to 10 numeric points, for each day late (i.e., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, etc.). This late policy includes Saturdays and Sundays.
- Email and faculty/student communication. I regularly send emails to provide students with updates and vital information on the class and to supply links to interesting articles. Students are required to check their emails regularly for course information.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a condition that makes it difficult to complete the work in this course, then please notify me and the Disabled Student Services Office within the first two weeks of class to develop alternative arrangements. All information and documentation of the disability will be confidential.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

The Georgia State University policy on academic honesty will be strictly enforced. Students should review the policy, which is found in Section 1344 (Academic Honesty) of the Georgia State University Graduate Catalogue, pages 55-59. In particular, plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Note that page 56 of Section 1344 contains the following definition of plagiarism:

“Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting 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. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete

reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. 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.”

Cite all works, including texts, journals, Internet materials, and other sources of information. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action that may result in failing the course and suspension or expulsion from the University. I take plagiarism very seriously, so if you are in doubt, then please contact me with questions at [etwombly@gsu.edu](mailto:etwombly@gsu.edu).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

The schedule below provides a general plan for the course. Adjustments may be necessary.

Wk #   Date                      Topic

#### **I. Framing Social Policy Problems**

1.      January 7                      Social policy and problem definition
2.      January 14                      Ideology and evidence in social policy
  - Banfield, Edward. 1974. *The Unheavenly City Revisited*. Read chapters 1 and 2.
3.      January 21                      Decision making and the role of values in the policy process
  - Hirschmann, A.O. 1970. *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*. Read chapters 1 - 3 and 7 - 8.
  - Ellwood, D. 1989. *Poor Support*. Read Chapter 1, “Values and the helping conundrums,” pages 14-44.
4.      January 28                      Institutional factors in social policy
  - Smith, S.R., and Lipsky, M. 1989. “Nonprofit Organizations, Government, and the Welfare State,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 104(4), 625-648.
  - De Vita, C.J. and Twombly, E.C. 2006. “Welfare reform and devolution: What do we know?” In Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle (Eds.) *Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
  - Light, P. 2001. “Government: Greatest priorities of the next half century.” *Reform Watch Brief*, No. 4 (December 27), The Brookings Institution.
  - Gronbjerg, K.A., and Salamon, L.M. 2002. “Devolution, Marketization, and the Changing Shape of Government-Nonprofit Relations.” In Lester M. Salamon (Ed.) *The State of Nonprofit America*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

#### **II. Poverty and Welfare**

5.      February 4                      Exploring poverty

- Glennerster, H. 2002. "United States Poverty Studies and Poverty Measurement: The Past Twenty-Five Years," *The Social Service Review*, 76(1), 83-107.
- Fisher, G.M. 1997. *The Development and History of the U.S. Poverty Thresholds: A Brief Overview*. Government Statistics Section and the Social Statistics Section Newsletter, American Statistical Association, Winter.

**Note: topics for the research projects must be cleared with me by February 4.**

6. February 11                      The roots of anti-poverty policy
- Banfield, Edward. 1974. *The Unheavenly City Revisited*. Read chapters 3 and 4.
  - Scott, J., and Leonhardt, D. 2005. "Shadowy lines that still divide: Class in America." *New York Times*, May 15.
  - Wilson, William Julius. 1996. "When Work Disappears." *Political Science Quarterly*, 111(4), 567-595.
  - Jencks, C., Swingle, J., and Winship S. 2006. "Welfare Redux," *The American Prospect*, 17(3), 36-40.
  - Jargowsky, P. 2005. The "Underclass" Revisited: A Social Problem in Decline." *Brookings Working Paper*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, May.
7. February 18                      Mid-term examination (in class)

### III. Housing

8. February 25                      How to define the housing problem
- Yinger, J. 2001. "Housing discrimination and residential segregation as causes of poverty." In S.H. Danziger and R.H. Haveman (Eds.). *Understanding Poverty*. Read pages 359-391.
  - McCarty, M. 2005. An Overview of the Section 8 Housing Program. Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, January.
  - Popkin, Susan J. et al. 2002. *HOPE VI Panel Study: Baseline Report*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Read Executive Summary, i-ix; peruse the remainder of document.

\*\*\* March 4 – NO CLASS – Spring Break                      \*\*\*

9. March 11                              Directions in U.S. housing policy
- Massey, D.S. and Denton, N.A. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Read Chapters 1 and 7.
  - Duncan, G., and Ludwig, J. 2000. "Can Housing Vouchers Help Poor Kids?" *Brookings Review*, July.
  - Turner, M.A., and Rawlings, L.A. 2005. "Overcoming Concentrated Poverty and Isolation: Ten Lessons for Policy and Practice." Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

#### IV. Crime and Law Enforcement

10. March 18                      Criminals: bad apples or bad breaks?
  - Banfield, Edward. 1974. *The Unheavenly City Revisited*. Read chapter 8
  - Jencks, C. 1993. *Rethinking Social Policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Read Chapter 3, “Heredity, inequality and crime.”
11. March 25                      Controlling crime
  - Skogan, W. 1992. *Disorder and Decline: Crime and the Spiral of Decay in American Neighborhoods*. University of California Press. Read Chapters 1, 2 and 7.

#### VI. Course Conclusion

12. April 1                        Group research presentations
13. April 8                        No Class – I will be at the Southwestern Political Science meetings. Please use this time to work on your research projects.
14. April 15                      Group research presentations
15. April 22                      Group research presentations and course summary (Take-home final examination will be distributed)
16. April 29                      Final examinations and research papers due to me no later than 5pm.