

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Department of Politics

POL-UA 382 — Fall 2021
Politics of Poverty and Welfare
Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15 PM, LL23

Napoleon Williams III, Ph.D.
napoleon.williamsiii@nyu.edu

7 East 12th Street, LL23
New York, NY 10003

Office hours: Tue./Thu. 3:15 – 4:00 PM, and by appointment

Grader: Jacob Evanger
je2250@nyu.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

Politics of Poverty and Welfare is a survey course designed to expose scholars to contrasting theories about poverty, the role of government in antipoverty efforts, and taxpayer-funded assistance programs in the United States. This course will challenge the scholar to think critically about arguments relating to the causes and effects of poverty, divergent political approaches to addressing poverty and poverty-related issues, and the ongoing debate over America’s social safety net. We will examine the principal theories, rationale, institutions, and processes associated with the development, implementation, and evolution of the welfare state in the United States, and we will engage in exercises to build and hone skills for identifying and accessing how political and social ideologies inform and impact public discussions, policy decisions, and program funding.

To further bolster the scholar’s proficiencies in the topic, we will explore welfare program goals, outcomes, and indicators. We will survey federal-level administrations, bureaucratic behaviors, *defenses* of welfare, proposals for policy and programmatic *improvements*, and *alternatives* to welfare. We will consider the implications of historical precedents and the potentialities of contemporary concepts to formulate critiques of public welfare. Each scholar will demonstrate a degree of course comprehension, analytical competence, and proclivity for candor by constructing three short argumentative essays (one for preserving, one for restructuring, and one for dismantling the welfare system in America) and by responding to questions on the midterm and final exams.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Scholars are required to perform the following four main tasks: 1.) attend class, 2.) read required materials, 3.) produce three academic writings, and 4.) take two exams. First, attendance will prove crucial to the scholar’s success in this course. The information, techniques, and caveats essential to performing well on the essays and exams will be delivered, discussed, and dissected during class meetings only. Class will begin promptly at 2:00 PM. Each meeting (except for those reserved for exams) will consist of a lecture, a guided thought exercise, and a Q&A session centered on the scheduled topic and assigned readings. The lecture will consist primarily of a logical analysis and highlighting of key elements taken from the readings. The guided thought exercise is intended to

encapsulate, reinforce, and crystallize the lesson presented in the lecture, and the Q&A session provides an opportunity to inquire, challenge, clarify, expound, revisit, share, etc.

Second, scholars must read the required materials to keep pace with the course. Lectures will not include a review of the readings but rather an interrogation of the fundamental premise, central claims, theoretical framework, and other factors associated with the broader body of work. Only when the scholar is familiar with the texts will the topic, tone, and tenor of the lectures, exercises, and Q&A discussions support and strengthen the scholar's capacity to reason philosophically about the core conjectures, findings, and tenets put forth in the assigned works. While scholars are not required to read the recommended materials, they are encouraged to do so. Reading and contemplating the recommendations in combination with the required readings will empower the scholar to become more acquainted with the content, context, and continuity of the class and can help equip the scholar with additional insights and instruments useful for excelling in the course.

Third, scholars are required to write three short (5-7 page/double-spaced), applicable, coherent, and sound argumentative essays for supporting, amending, and opposing the welfare system in the United States. Essays must be in Microsoft Word, editable for comments and markups, and uploaded to NYU Brightspace online learning management system no later than the essay's due date and no earlier than exactly one week prior to the essay's due date. Due dates for the essays are spread out over the semester with the first essay due in week eight, the second in week twelve, and the third in week fifteen. For essay due dates, requirements, format, scoring, and other details, see argumentative essays beginning on page nineteen of this syllabus.

Fourth, scholars are required to take a midterm exam and a final exam. The midterm exam is intended to measure the scholar's understanding of *select* course material covered from the start of the semester to the midpoint of the semester. Select course material refers to the parts of the course that are especially pertinent to the structuring of the argumentative essays (i.e., theory, claims, logical reasoning, evidentiary support, etc.). These items will be emphasized throughout the semester because they are the fundamental building blocks of a valid argument, and to prepare strong written arguments, the writer must possess a good command of these precepts. The midterm exam will serve as a valuable tool from which to draw lessons with three-fifths of the total course deliverables yet to fall due. The final exam will be cumulative and is utilized to assess the scholar's mastery of the course's major components (i.e., theories of poverty, political processes, antipoverty policies, programs, etc.). Both exams will consist of multiple choice, true or false, term matching, fill in the blank, and one potential score-boosting but exceptionally difficult bonus question.

COURSE READING MATERIALS

No Course Textbooks Required

In lieu of textbooks, this course leverages articles, book chapters, presentations, reports, reference tools, and other resources. For scholars' convenience, downloadable versions of the reading materials have been uploaded to NYU's Brightspace online learning management system under POL-UA 382 Politics of Poverty and Welfare Readings-Fall 2021. Recommended readings are listed later in this syllabus under course calendar and after listings of required readings. Recommended readings can also be found on Brightspace. Online materials will include a link to the website in the listing and will not be included in the Brightspace cache of readings.

While I have tried to devote at least one week to the most pertinent topics in the study of the politics of poverty and welfare, this course is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject. Relevant research, data, and literature are too numerous to master in one course. However, the readings will cover a wide range of intellectual problems, theoretical perspectives, research designs, and analytical methods used in the field. I hope this course will help you gain a stronger sense of how politicians, practitioners, and academics formulate, investigate, communicate, and operate and the impact these activities have on policy, programs, and the public in general.

Required

“Constrained versus Unconstrained Visions” handout based on Sowell, T. (1987). *A Conflict of Visions: Ideological Origins of Political Struggles*. New York: Morrow.

Putnam, R. (2013). “Crumbling American Dreams.”; Brooks, D. (2012). “The Opportunity Gap.”; and Gerson, M. (2014). “Our Disconnected Working Class.” (Note: These three New York Times opinion articles have been combined into one file under “Crumbling American Dream Robert Putnam.”)

Carcasson, M. (2004). “Negotiating the Paradoxes of Poverty: Presidential Rhetoric on Welfare from Johnson to Clinton.” A Dissertation Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of Texas A&M University (December).

AEI/Brookings Working Group on Poverty and Opportunity. (2015). “Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security: A Consensus Plan for Reducing Poverty and Restoring the American Dream.” Washington, DC: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI) and Brookings Institution.

Murray, C. (2019). “The New American Divide.” Dow Jones & Company, Inc. Originally released as forerunner to Murray’s 2012 book *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960–2010*. New York: Crown Forum.

George Brown College Tutoring and Learning Centre. (2014) “Argumentative Essays.” *Tutoring and Learning Centre Educational Resources*. Toronto, Ontario: George Brown College.

Brady, D. (2019). “Theories of the Causes of Poverty.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45(April):155–175.

Turner, K. and A. J. Lehning. (2007). “Psychological Theories of Poverty.” *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 16:1-2, 57-72.

Wolf, J. P. (2007). “Sociological Theories of Poverty in Urban America.” *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 16:1-2, 41-56.

Calnitsky, D. (2018). “Structural and Individualistic Theories of Poverty.” *Sociology Compass*, 12: e12640: Wiley.

- Jordan, G. (2004). "The Causes of Poverty Cultural vs. Structural: Can There be a Synthesis?" *Perspectives in Public Affairs* (Spring).
- Iceland, J. (2013). *Poverty in America: A Handbook (3rd Edition)*. Chapter 2: "Methods of Measuring Poverty." Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Smeeding, T. M. (2014). "Chapter 6: Poverty Measurement." Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No. 1424-14. From *Oxford Handbook of Poverty and Society*, D. Brady and L. Burton, eds. Oxford University Press.
- Dhongde, S. and R. Haveman. (2015). "Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index: An Application to the United States." Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No. 1427-15.
- Haveman, R. (2009). "What does it mean to be poor in a rich society?" *Focus*, 26(2) Fall: 81-86.
- United States House of Representatives Budget Committee Report (2014). "The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later." House Budget Committee Majority Staff (March).
- Executive Office of the President of the United States. (2014). *The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report*. Chapter 6. The Council of Economic Advisors. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Garfinkel, I, and T. Smeeding. (2010). "Wealth and Welfare States: What Is the Real Story?" Institute for Research on Poverty. Discussion Paper No. 1387-10.
- Haskins, R. (2015). "TANF at Age 20: Work Still Works." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 00(0): 1-8.
- Musgrave, F. W. (2009). "Government as Anti-Poverty Facilitator in the USA: Static Inequality Gap." *Journal of Education Finance*, 34(4): 402-425. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Micheltmore, M. C. (2011). *Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Politics, and the Limits of American Liberalism*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kohler-Hausmann, J. (2015). "Guns and Butter: The Welfare State, the Carceral State, and the Politics of Exclusion in the Postwar United States." *The Journal of American History*, (June): 87-99. Oxford University Press.
- Caplan, B. (2001). "Rational Ignorance Versus Rational Irrationality." *Kyklos International Review for Social Sciences*, 54(1): 3-26.
- Mead, L. M. (2011). *Expanding Work Programs for Poor Men*. Washington, DC: the American Enterprise Institute Press.
- Loprest, P., and K. Martinson. (2008). "Supporting Work for Low-Income People with

- Significant Challenges.” New Safety Net Paper 5 (July). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Doar, R., ed. (2017). *A Safety Net That Works: Improving Federal Programs for Low-Income Americans*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- Sawhill, I, and Q. Karpilow. (2014). “A No-Cost Proposal to Reduce Poverty & Inequality.” *CCF Brief # 51*. Center on Children and Families at Brookings (January). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Berger, L. M., M. Cancian, and K. Magnuson. (2018). “Anti-Poverty Policy Innovations: New Proposals for Addressing Poverty in the United States.” *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 4(3): 1-19.
- Pardoe, R., and D. Bloom. (2014). “Paycheck Plus: A New Antipoverty Strategy for Single Adults.” MDRC Policy Brief (May).
- Ben-Shalom, Y., R. A. Moffitt, and J. K. Scholz. (2011). “An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programs in the United States.”, NBER Working Paper No. 17042. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Huang, C., and J. Vikse. (2014). “War on Poverty: Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programs in the United States.” Huamin Research Center, Research Report No. 17 (November). Rutgers School of Social Work.
- Kail, B. L., and M. Dixon. (2011). “The Uneven Patterning of Welfare Benefits at the Twilight of AFDC: Assessing the Influence of Institutions, Race, and Citizen Preferences.” *The Sociological Quarterly*, 52 (3): 376-399.
- Nino, M. D. (2010). “Welfare Reform: A Continued Failure?” Presented at the annual meeting of the *American Society for Public Administration*, San Jose, California. Printed in the *PB&J*, 2(2): 9-15. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University.
- Brady, D., A. Blome, and H. Kleider. (2017). “How Politics and Institutions Shape Poverty and Inequality.” David Brady and Linda M. Burton, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty* (August).
- Bane, M. J. (2009). “Poverty Politics and Policy.” *Focus*, 26(2) Fall: 75-80.
- Cohen, G. L. (2003). “Party Over Policy: The Dominating Impact of Group Influence on Political Beliefs.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(5): 808-822.
- Faricy, C. (2011). “The Politics of Social Policy in America: The Causes and Effects of Indirect Versus Direct Social Spending.” *The Journal of Politics*, 73(1): 74–83.
- Pew Research Center Report. (2014). “Political Polarization in the American Public: How

Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life.”

- Rector, R., and R. Sheffield. (2014). “The War on Poverty After 50 Years.” *Backgrounder*, No. 2955(September): 1-10. Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation.
- Hardy, B. L., R. Samudra, and J. A. Davis. (2019). “Cash Assistance in America: The Role of Race, Politics, and Poverty.” *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 46(4): 306-324.
- Gingrich, J. (2015). “Still Not Dismantling? The Legacy of "Dismantling the Welfare State" in Comparative Politics.” *Political Science and Politics*, 48(2): 279-283.
- Clarke, J. (2014). “The End of the Welfare State? The Challenges of Deconstruction and Reconstruction,” in *The End of Welfare as We Know it? Continuity and Change in Western Welfare State Settings and Practices*. Philipp Sandermann, ed. Leverkusen, Germany: Verlag Barbara Budrich Publishing.
- Halpin, J., K. Agne, and N. Jain. (2021). “Americans Want the Federal Government to Help People in Need New Polling Illustrates Voters’ Opinions on Economic Policies During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” A report from the *Center for American Progress*.
- Shaw, G. M. (2010). “Changes in Public Opinion and the American Welfare State.” *Political Science Quarterly*, 124(4): 627-653.
- Clawson, R. A., and R. Trice. (2000). “Poverty as We Know It: Media Portrayals of the Poor.” *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64(1): 53-64.
- van Doorn, B. W. (2015). “Pre- and Post-Welfare Reform Media Portrayals of Poverty in the United States: The Continuing Importance of Race and Ethnicity.” *Politics & Policy*, 43(1): 142-162.

COURSE CALENDAR

INTRODUCTION

Week 1

September 2: Introduction and Course Overview

Required

No required readings assigned prior to this initial class meeting.

Recommended

No recommended readings suggested prior to this initial class meeting.

(1). POVERTY

Week 2

September 7: Perspectives on Poverty

Required

“Constrained versus Unconstrained Visions.” one-page reference tool, Sowell

“Crumbling American Dreams.”; “The Opportunity Gap.”; and “Our Disconnected Working Class.” (Note: These three New York Times opinion articles have been combined into one file under “Crumbling American Dream Robert Putnam.”)

“Negotiating the Paradoxes of Poverty.” Carcasson: Introduction 1-4

“Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security.” AEI/Brookings: Executive Summary and Chapter 1: Introduction

“The New American Divide.” Murray

“Argumentative Essays.” George Brown College.

https://www.georgebrown.ca/sites/default/files/uploadedfiles/tlc/documents/argumentative_essays.pdf

Recommended

Hoynes, H. W., M. E. Page, and A. H. Stevens. (2006). “Poverty in America: Trends and Explanations.” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1): 47-68.

Ellen, I. G., L. A. Gennetian, and E. Shafir. (2015). The Persistence of Poverty in the Context of Financial Instability: A Behavioral Perspective.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 34(4): 904-936.

Fox, L., et al. (2015). “Trends in Deep Poverty from 1968 to 2011: The Influence of Family Structure, Employment Patterns, and the Safety Net.” *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 1(1): 14-34.

September 9: Theories of Poverty 1

Required

“Theories of the Causes of Poverty.” Brady

Recommended

Corcoran, M., et al. (1985). “Myth and Reality: The Causes and Persistence of Poverty.”

Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 4(4): 516-536.

Elesh, D. (1970). "Poverty Theories and Income Maintenance: Validity and Policy Relevance." Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin.

Addae-Korankye, A. (2019). "Theories of Poverty: A Critical Review." *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 48: 55-62.

Sameti, M., R. D. Esfahani, and H. K. Haghghi. (2012). "Theories of Poverty: A Comparative Analysis." *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 1(6) February: 45-56.

Stark, B. (2009). "Theories of Poverty/The Poverty of Theory." *BYU L. Rev.* 381.

Week 3

September 14: Theories of Poverty 2

Required

"Psychological Theories of Poverty." Turner and Lehning

"Sociological Theories of Poverty in Urban America." Wolf

"Structural and Individualistic Theories of Poverty." Calnitsky

"The Causes of Poverty Cultural vs. Structural." Jordan

Recommended

Sanders, J. M. (1991). "New" Structural Poverty?" *The Sociological Quarterly*, 32(2): 179-199.

Smeeding, T. M. (2002). "Sociology of Poverty." *Luxembourg Income Study*. Working Paper Series, No. 315.

Bradshaw, T. K. (2006). "Theories of Poverty and Anti-Poverty Programs in Community Development." *Rural Poverty Research Center (RPRC)*, Working Paper Series. Paper No. 06-05.

Sawhill, Isabel V. "The Behavioral Aspects of Poverty." Brookings Institution (Fall 2003). <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-behavioral-aspects-of-poverty/>

September 16: Measuring Poverty 1

Required

"Methods of Measuring Poverty." Iceland

Recommended

Brandolini, A., S. Magri, and T. M. Smeeding. (2009). “Asset-Based Measurement of Poverty.” Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper No. 1372-10.

Bohn, S. et al. (2013). “The California Poverty Measure: A New Look at the Social Safety Net.” Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.

Week 4**September 21: Measuring Poverty 2****Required**

“Chapter 6: Poverty Measurement.” Smeeding

“Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index” Dhongde and Haveman

Recommended

Wimer, C., et al. (2013). “Trends in Poverty with an Anchored Supplemental Poverty Measure.” New York: Columbia Population Research Center.

Fox, L., et al. (2015). “Waging War on Poverty: Poverty Trends Using a Historical Supplemental Poverty Measure.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 34(3): 567–592.

September 23: Conceptualizing Poverty and Poverty Trends**Required**

“Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security.” AEI/Brookings: Chapter 2: The Facts

Haveman, R. (2009). “What does it mean to be poor in a rich society?” *Focus*, 26(2) Fall: 81-86.

Recommended

Larrimore, J., J. Mortenson, and D. Splinter. (2015). “Income and Earnings Mobility in U.S. Tax Data.” *Economic Mobility: Research & Ideas on Strengthening Families, Communities & the Economy*. A Joint Committee on Taxation project.

Sugrue, T. J. (1994). “The Impoverished Politics of Poverty.” *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 6(1) Art. 15: 163-179.

Banerjee, A. V., and A. L. Jameel. (2008). “Why Fighting Poverty is Hard.” Department of Economics and the Poverty Action Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Crossman, A. (2019). “Understanding Poverty and Its Various Types.” *ThoughtCo*, (July 18). <https://www.thoughtco.com/poverty-3026458>

(2). THE WELFARE STATE

Week 5

September 28: The War on Poverty (Constrained)

Required

“The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later.” House Budget Committee: Introduction pg. 3-10, Chapter 1: Cash Aid, Chapter 4: Food Aid, Chapter 6: Housing

Recommended

“From Food Stamps to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).” *A legislative timeline tool*

“Historical Development.” *A U.S. social welfare structure quick reference tool*

Gunderson, G. W. (1971). “The National School Lunch Program: Background and Development.” Washington, DC: United States Government Printing.

The Food Stamp Act of 1964, Pub. L. No. 88-525, H.R. 10222, 88th Congress (1964).

USDA Food and Nutrition Service- A Short History of SNAP
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/short-history-snap#2014>

September 30: Tackling Single Parenthood

Required

“Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security.” AEI/Brookings: Chapter 3: Family

Recommended

“A Brief Legislative History of the Child Welfare System.” by Kasia O’Neill Murray and Sarah Gesiriech *A quick reference tool*

“The Family Support Act of 1988.” *A quick reference tool*

Haskins, R. (2009.) “Getting Ahead in America.” *National Affairs*, (Fall).
<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/getting-ahead-in-america>

Haskins, R., and W. Primus. (2001). “Welfare Reform and Poverty.” *The Center on Children and Families*, July 1 brief. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/welfare-reform-and-poverty/>

Week 6**October 5: The War on Poverty (Unconstrained)****Required**

“The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report: Chapter 6.” Office of POTUS

“Wealth and Welfare States: What Is the Real Story?” Garfinkel and Smeeding

Recommended

“A Brief Overview of Race and Social Welfare History- Key Legislation” *A quick reference tool*

Kataja, L. A. (2017). “A History of Welfare Policy in the United States: To Feed or Blame the Hungry?”: *Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange (TRACE)*. Chancellor’s Honors Program Projects. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee.

Santiago, A. M. (2015). “Fifty Years Later: From a War on Poverty to a War on the Poor.” *Social Problems*, 62, 2-14. Oxford University Press.

October 7: Expand Employment Opportunities and Raise Pay**Required**

“Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security.” AEI/Brookings: Chapter 4: Work

“TANF at Age 20: Work Still Works.” Haskins

Recommended

“Subsidized Employment Is a Strategy for Tough Economic Times and for the Hard-to-Employ” MDRC policy memo

U.S. Congressional Research Service. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Legislative History (R44668; November 30, 2020).

Meara, E., and R. G. Frank. (2006). “Welfare Reform, Work Requirements, and Employment Barriers.” National Bureau of Economic Research. Working Paper No. 12480.

Week 7**October 12: In Defense of the Welfare State****Required**

“Government as Anti-Poverty Facilitator in the USA.” Musgrave

“Tax and Spend...Chapter 1: Defending the Welfare and Taxing State.” Michelmore

Recommended

Parolin, Z., and M. Wiseman. (2016). “Restoring the Entrails of Welfare Reform Zachary.” Institute for Research on Poverty. IRP Discussion Paper No. 1433-16.

Moffitt, R. A. (2013). “The Great Recession and the Social Safety Net.” *The American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 650(1): 143–166.

October 14: Strengthening the Defense of the Welfare State

Required

“Guns and Butter: The Welfare State, the Carceral State...” Kohler-Hausmann

Caplan, B. (2001). “Rational Ignorance Versus Rational Irrationality.” *Kyklos International Review for Social Sciences*, 54(1): 3-26.

Recommended

Skocpol, T. (1996). “The Politics of American Social Policy, Past and Future.” in *Individual and Social Responsibility: Child Care, Education, Medical Care, and Long-Term Care in America.* Victor R. Fuchs, ed. National Bureau of Economic Research. University of Chicago Press.

Hannah-Jones, Nikole. “What Is Owed.” New York Times Interactive Magazine, June 30, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/24/magazine/reparations-slavery.html>

(3). INSISTENCE, IMPROVEMENTS, INNOVATIONS, AND INDICATORS

Week 8

October 19: Insistence

Required

“Expanding Work Programs for Poor Men.” Mead: Chapters 3, 4, and 5

“Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security.” AEI/Brookings: Chapters 5 and 6

“Supporting Work for Low-Income People....” Loprest and Martinson.

Recommended

Haskins, R., and I. Sawhill. (2009). *Creating an Opportunity Society*. “Chapter 1: Our Vision.” Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

McLanahan, S., et al., eds. (2007). “The Next Generation of Antipoverty Policies.” *The Future of Children*, 17(2) Fall. Princeton-Brookings.

October 21: Essay #1 and Midterm Exam (in-class)

Required

No required readings assigned for this class meeting.

Recommended

No readings recommended for this class meeting.

Week 9

October 26: Improvements

Required

“A Safety Net That Works.” Doar: “The EITC”-Meyer 1-18, “Viewing Food Stamp”-Sykes 19-46, “Reducing Poverty by Reform Housing Policy”-Olsen 87-106, and “TANF”-Haskins 129-146

Recommended

“A Safety Net That Works.” Doar: “Medicaid”-Capretta 47-62, “Empowering Child Support Enforcement”-Doar 63-86, “Child Welfare”-Corrigan 107-128, “The SSID Children Program”-Burkhauser and Daly 147-159, “Child Care Assistance”-Rachidi 160-178, “WIC”-Besharov and Call 179-205, and “Federal Early Childhood Care/Education Programs”-Stevens 221-244

Eissa, N., and H. Hoynes. (2011). “Redistribution and Tax Expenditures: The Earned Income Tax Credit.” *National Tax Journal*, 64(2, Part 2): 689–730.

“Smart Social Programs” - Jason Furman

October 28: Innovations

Required

“A No-Cost Proposal to Reduce Poverty & Inequality.” Sawhill and Karpilow

“Anti-Poverty Policy Innovations.” Berger, Cancian, and Magnuson

“Paycheck Plus.” Pardoe and Bloom

Recommended

“Balancing Welfare Support for Poor Families and Children with Promoting Self Sufficiency Through Work.” MDRC quick reference tool

Berlin, G. L. (2010). “Rethinking Welfare in the Great Recession: Issues in the Reauthorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.” Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee. MDRC (September 21).

“Which Families are Poor and Why?” Institute for Research on Poverty Fact Sheet

Week 10

November 2: Indicators 1

Required

“An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programs in the United States.” Ben-Shalom, Moffitt, and Scholz

“War on Poverty: Effectiveness of Anti-Poverty Programs...” Huang and Vikse

Recommended

Vara, V. (2013). “Has America Become Less Poor?” *The New Yorker*, business /currency (December 10).

Goldfarb, Z. (2013). “Study: U.S. Poverty Rate Decreased Over Past Half-Century Thanks to Safety-Net Programs.” *The Washington Post*, business (December 9).

Ziliak, J. P. (2013). “Why are so Many Americans on Food Stamps?: The Role of Economy, Policy, and Demographics.” *University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research Discussion Paper Series, DP2013-01*.

Pavetti, L. (2013). “TANF Provided a Weak Safety Net During and After Recession.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, (March 4). <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/tanf-provided-a-weak-safety-net-during-and-after-recession>

November 4: Indicators 2

Required

“The Uneven Patterning of Welfare Benefits at the Twilight of AFDC.” Kail and Dixon

“Welfare Reform: A Continued Failure?” Nino

Recommended

Hendren, N., and B. Sprung-Keyser. (2020). “A Unified Welfare Analysis of Government Policies.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 135(3): 1209-1318.

Hoynes, H. W., D. W. Schanzenbach, and D. Almond. (2014). “Long Run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net.” NBER Report (April). Cambridge, MA: National

Bureau of Economic Research.

Bruch, S. K., Meyers, M. K., and Gornick, J. C. (2016). “Separate and Unequal: The Dimensions and Consequences of Safety Net Decentralization in the U.S. 1994-2014.” Institute for Research on Poverty, IRP Discussion Paper No. 1432-16.

Chetty, R. (2009). “Sufficient Statistics for Welfare Analysis: A Bridge Between Structural and Reduced-Form Methods.” *The Annual Review of Economics*, 1(45): 1-87.

(4). THE POLITICS OF POVERTY AND WELFARE

Week 11

November 9: Policy, Power, and Paradoxes

Required

“How Politics and Institutions Shape Poverty and Inequality.” Brady, Blome, and Kleider

“Negotiating the Paradoxes of Poverty.” Carcasson: *The Paradoxes of Poverty/Con.* 4-27

“Poverty Politics and Policy.” Bane

Recommended

Soss, J. (1999). “Lessons of Welfare Policy Design Political Learning and Political Action.” *American Political Science Review*, 93(2): 363-380.

November 11: Partisanship, Polarization, and Principles 1

Required

“Party Over Policy.” Cohen

“The Politics of Social Policy in America.” Faricy

Recommended

Gelman, Andrew, (2013). “Charles Murray’s Coming Apart and the Measurement of Social and Political Divisions.” *Statistics, Politics, and Policy*, 4(1): 70–81.

Nishiyama, T. (2008). “The American Welfare State and the City: The Politics of the Social Welfare Policy in New York City under the Lindsay Administration.” *The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, No. 19.

Fishbein, D., N. Wollman, and A. Biglan. (2014). “Bipartisan Approach to Preventing Poverty’s Impact and Persistence.” *The Hill*, (September 5).

<https://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/216701-bipartisan-approach-to-preventing-povertys-impact-and>

Week 12**November 16: The Role of Government****Required**

“Tax and Spend...” Michelmore: Chapters 3 and 5, and Epilogue: Stalemate

Recommended

Fellowes, M. C., and G. Rowe. (2004). “Politics and the New American Welfare States.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2) April: 362-373. Bloomington, IN: Midwest Political Science Association.

Gainous, J., S. C. Craig, and M. D. Martinez. (2008). “Social Welfare Attitudes and Ambivalence about the Role of Government.” *Politics & Policy*, 36 (6): 972-1004.

November 18: Essay #2 Due / Executive Rhetoric**Required**

“Negotiating the Paradoxes of Poverty.” Carcasson: Chapter II 35-40, Chapter III 70-73, Chapter IV 104-107, Chapter V 130-132, Chapter VI 177-180.

Recommended

Finan, A. L. (2007). “Defining Reality: The Poverty and Welfare Rhetoric of Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan.” UNLV Retrospective Theses and Dissertations (2230). University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Week 13**November 23: Partisanship, Polarization, and Principles 2****Required**

“Political Polarization in the American Public.” Pew Research Center Report: Overview, and Sections 1, 2, and 3.

Recommended

Binning, K. R., et al. (2010). “Seeing the Other Side: Reducing Political Partisanship via Self-Affirmation in the 2008 Presidential Election.” *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 00(00): 1-17.

November 25: HAPPY THANKSGIVING (no class)**Required**

No required readings assigned

Recommended

No readings recommended

(5). FRAMING THE NARRATIVE: PEOPLE, POLICIES, PROGRAMS**Week 14****November 30: Redistribution and Dependency?****Required**

“Tax and Spend...Chapter 2: Market Failure.” Michelmore

“The War on Poverty After 50 Years.” Rector and Sheffield

Recommended

Carlson, D., et al. (2010). “The Benefits and Costs of the Section 8 Housing Subsidy Program: A Framework and First-Year Estimates.” Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No. 1380-10 (May).

Aizer, A., et al. (2014). The Long Term Impact of Cash Transfers to Poor Families.” National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 20103 (May).

Yowell, C. C. (2020). “Taxpayers, not Tax-Eaters: The Problems and Pitfalls of Talking about Poverty.” Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin.

Gabe, T. (2014). “Welfare, Work, and Poverty Status of Female-Headed Families with Children: 1987-2013.” Congressional Research Service Report, R41917 (November 21).

December 2: Disparities, Dismantling, and Deconstruction**Required**

“Cash Assistance in America.” Hardy, Samudra, and Davis

“Still Not Dismantling?” Gingrich

“The End of the Welfare State?” Clarke

Recommended

Cancian, M, and S. Danziger. (2009). “Changing Poverty and Changing Antipoverty Policies.” Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper No. 1364-09.

Ravallion, M. (2005). “Evaluating Anti-Poverty Programs.” Chapter 59. 3788-3846. Development Research Group, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Bruch, S. K., M. M. Ferree, and J. Soss. (2009). "From Policy to Polity: Democracy, Paternalism, and the Incorporation of Disadvantaged Citizens." Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper No. 1362-09.

"Suburban Poverty." 2018 Fact Sheet by Will Maher, Institute for Research on Poverty

Week 15

December 7: Preferences, Portrayals, and Prerogatives

Required

"Americans Want the Federal Government to Help..." Halpin, Agne, and Jain

Shaw, G. M. (2010). "Changes in Public Opinion and the American Welfare State." *Political Science Quarterly*, 124(4): 627-653.

"Poverty as We Know It." Clawson and Trice

"Pre- and Post-Welfare Reform Media Portrayals of Poverty...." van Doorn

Recommended

Halpin, J., and K. Agne. (2014). "50 Years After LBJ's War on Poverty: A Study of American Attitudes About Work, Economic Opportunity, and the Social Safety Net." Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

Rose, M., and F. R. Baumgartner. (2013). "Framing the Poor: Media Coverage and U.S. Poverty Policy, 1960–2008." *The Policy Studies Journal*, 41(1): 22-53.

December 9: Essay #3 Due / Review and Prep for Final

Recommended

Bailey, M. J., and N. J. Duquette. (2014). "How Johnson Fought the War on Poverty: The Economics and Politics of Funding at the Office of Economic Opportunity." *Journal of Economic History*, 74(2): 351–388.

"Negotiating the Paradoxes of Poverty." Carcasson: VII. Conclusion

Rank, M. R. (2011). "Rethinking American Poverty." *Contexts, Big Ideas, Stubborn Realities*, 10(2): 16-21. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Morgen, S. (2002). "The Politics of Welfare and of Poverty Research." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75(4): 745-757.

Week 16**December 14: Final Exam (in-class)*****ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS***

Scholars will make definitive decisions in selecting theories, perspectives, and positions from which to argue. Playing both sides of the fence will not fly in this course. The scholar must choose a side on the issue at hand. This is precisely why the essays are split into three stances—support, improve, and oppose. For each stance, scholars must not only express why that respective position is preferable in and of itself, but the scholar must also demonstrate why that position is better than an alternative stance such as maintaining the status quo, making a change, or elimination.

Scholars are strongly encouraged not to summarize opposing theories, perspectives, and positions but to lay out crisp, debatable claims and counterclaims backed up by supporting points instead (Remember: the most important thing about an argumentative essay is that you must show both sides of a contentious issue). While it is important to highlight the pros of the affirmative, it is just as important to defend and rationalize the affirmative against alternatives. Given the short length of the essays, scholars must utilize brevity, optimize word selection, and leverage optimal argumentative structure. Therefore, scholars are encouraged to start fast right out of the gate. In other words, get to the point, make every word count, and save the fluffy filler for your magnum opus. Most importantly, do not stress over the essays. They are not intended to fluster, frustrate, or infuriate but rather enlighten, expand, and empower the writer as well as the reader. We will go over the structure, style, and science behind the sequence of the essays incessantly this semester.

Essay #1**Due October 21: *An Argument to Preserve the Welfare State in the United States***

In this essay, the scholar will make an argument for maintaining America's current welfare state. By selecting and citing theory/s of poverty, social challenges, and economic problems the welfare system addresses, outlining how the system addresses these issues, and arguing why current policies and programs are the best way to address the issues cited, scholars will defend the welfare system against proposals to amend the system and proposals to eliminate the system.

Essay #2**Due November 18: *An Argument to Restructure the Welfare State in the United States***

In this essay, the scholar will make an argument for improving America's current welfare state by making fundamental changes to the system. Scholars will cite indicators, paradoxes, and other relevant reasons why the system needs restructuring, what needs to be done differently, and why these changes will prove better than the current system and better than eliminating the system.

Essay #3**Due December 9: An Argument to Dismantle the Welfare State in the United States**

In this essay, the scholar will make an argument for doing away with America's welfare state altogether. By citing relevant theories, outcomes of the war on poverty, problems with the system, prospects, and alternatives, scholars will argue for the complete dismantling of the welfare system in the United States. We use "dismantle" as it is unlikely that such a robust and complex system can simply be ended. Scholars will argue for, how, and why policy/processes wind programs down.

Essay Format

Type- Microsoft Word Document (editable, no pdf).

Cover Page- essay title, scholar's name and e-mail address, course title and number, and date.

Essay Length- 5-7 pages, excluding cover page, references, tables, figures, end notes (footnotes are fine, but their impact on the page count needs to be considered).

Margins- standard one-inch (1") margins all around.

Font- Times New Roman 12, (Note: for tables, figures, end notes, and footnotes, use Calibri 10)

Spacing- double-spaced

Page Numbering- top, middle, beginning with page number (1) on first page after cover page.

Sources- only the required and recommended readings assigned for this course.

References- American Political Science Association style (guide available at:

<https://mk0apsaconnectbvy6p6.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/07/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-July-2020-Revision.pdf>

Submission- essays are to be uploaded to the NYU Brightspace online learning management system no later than the essay's due date and no earlier than exactly one week prior to the essay's due date. Papers may not be submitted as hard copies in person, via fax, or e-mail. Essays uploaded up to a week after the deadline will receive a 15-point deduction. No essay over one week past due will be accepted. Unforeseen mishaps are unfortunate, but they are not sufficient for extensions in this course. Only medical emergencies with official documentation are considered admissible.

Essay Scoring

Essays are assessed for strength of argument (60%) and grammatic structure and correctness (40%). Each essay begins with a total of 100 points (60 for argument and 40 for writing) which are subject to protection and deduction. Arguments are measured according to the George Brown College "Argumentative Essays" reference tool:

https://www.georgebrown.ca/sites/default/files/uploadedfiles/tlc_documents/argumentative_essays.pdf. There are 15 four-point elements (for a total of 60 points) to the argument. We will go over each of these elements in the coming weeks. Grammatic structure and correctness refers to the standard spelling, usage, punctuation, length, and format accuracy and has 20 two-point

elements (for a total of 40 points). In other words, every grammatic error receives a two-point deduction (Note: each violation of the essay format receives an automatic six-point deduction).

The final score of each essay is derived from the total points remaining after each four-point element of the argument is either protected by its presence or deducted on account of its absence, and the 40-point grammatic allowance is figured by deducting two points for every grammatic error. Also, remember essay format violations cost six points each; **make sure to format your essays according to the essay format provided above**. Once again, most importantly, do not stress over the essays. They are not intended to fluster, frustrate, or infuriate but rather enlighten, expand, and empower the writer as well as the reader. We will go over the structure, style, and science behind the sequence of the essays incessantly this semester.

My goal is to provide you encouragement, guidance, and insight that helps illuminate whatever path you choose to take in the next step on your academic and professional journeys. I take my roles as an educator, mentor, and coach serious. I approach each of these responsibilities with careful consideration, and I treat each scholar that I have the pleasure and privilege of encountering and affecting with the utmost respect. I expect nothing more and nothing less in return. As we embark on this voyage of engagement, exploration, and discovery, let us remember that although this expedition is meant to enhance our intellect, we are also allowed to enjoy the experience.

“One of the great challenges in this world is knowing enough about a subject to think you're right, but not enough about the subject to know you're wrong.”

— Neil deGrasse Tyson

Policy Regarding Disability Services and Programs

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980). Reasonable accommodations can be made for students with qualified disabilities, but only for students who have registered with the Moses Center and provide documentation from that office. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me in the first three weeks of the term.

Grading

There are five, equally weighted components to the grade:

1. **Essay #1** **20%**
2. **Midterm Exam** **20%**
3. **Essay #2** **20%**
4. **Essay #3** **20%**
5. **Final Exam** **20%**

FINAL GRADE IS BASED ON SUM OF SCORES DIVIDED BY FIVE

Academic Integrity

New York University is a community of scholars who value academic integrity a great deal. As a member of the NYU community, you are encouraged to learn and study with other members of our community but remember that individual assignments are just that—individual. To view a full list of New York University College of Arts and Sciences' academic codes, conducts, and procedures, visit:

<https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html>

Additional Administrative Details

- You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed in or outside of class.
- I reserve the right to revise this syllabus as the term progresses.
- Regarding lateness:
 - Class begins promptly at 2:00PM. Late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive to the lecturer, other scholars, and discussions. Please, stay mindful of this, plan accordingly, and reserve late entries, early exits, and reentries for those unavoidable occasions only. Your adherence to this request is appreciated.
 - For essays and exams, scholars are only permitted to take a make-up if they have a prior arrangement with me, or they produce official documentation from a doctor or university dean excusing the absence due to serious illness or family matter.
 - Travel, conflict with another activity or job, and other nonmedical reasons are not acceptable excuses for missing class, essay deadlines, or exams.
 - Technical difficulties uploading essays to Brightspace will not excuse you from the assignment or the repercussions for missing the deadline.
- For meeting requests, use my office hours, and if possible, email me ahead of time.
- Last but certainly not least, have a wonderful and fulfilling semester!