Syllabus
American Social Policy Challenges
Fall 2005

Faculty: Kenneth Apfel
Course Number: PA 388K
Unique Number: 64045
Classroom: 3.102
Time: Monday, 2:00-5:00 PM
Office: 3.236
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00-4:00 PM
Telephone: 471-6267
E-mail: kapfel@mail.utexas.edu
Assistant: Sharon Tutchings, Rm. 3.235; s.tutchings@mail.utexas.edu
Telephone: 232-4019

Description
This course provides an overview of social policy in the United States, with a focus on contemporary issues and challenges facing the nation.

We begin with an overview and history of American social policy, followed by an exploration of the key demographic and economic trends underway in the US, with particular attention placed on the changing picture of the poor, the elderly and our increasingly diverse population. The balance of the course work is devoted to analysis and discussion of the programs that now support the three key areas of US social policy—income security, health care and human capital investment. We examine key contemporary policy issues and options in all of these areas, including welfare reform and support for the poor and disabled, education and training, Social Security and Medicare for the elderly and health care for the poor and uninsured.

Principal readings are from Understanding Poverty (Danziger & Haveman) and A Working Nation (Ellwood et al). In addition, I have assigned a number of book chapters, articles, government publications, as well as topical policy research and advocacy pieces. A very wide range of opinion is presented.

The course requires very extensive reading and class preparation as well as a high level of participation in class. Student assessment will be based on class participation, weekly writings posted to the discussion board, short and lengthy written assignments, and group presentations on a variety of social policy topics.
Readings

Required textbooks for purchase at Coop East:


Other Key Readings:
The following texts are referenced in the syllabus and are used in class. Copies of the texts will be on reserve in the Public Affairs Library. Copies of the specific readings from the texts are available on ERes.


In addition, all other reading materials are available on ERes.

Course Requirements

Class participation and “weekly responses” to readings.

All students are expected to prepare for and actively participate in class discussions. It is absolutely essential that students read the course materials in advance of class.

Prior to each class, I ask that you post a brief reaction—no longer than 100-200 words—to the discussion board, where they will be available for reading by all members of the class. I urge you to read, build on and respond to the comments of the other class members. All reactions are due by close of business on the Sunday before class. Your response should include the following:

1. **Insight/Idea**: What did you see as the most important insight/idea from the readings?
2. **Reaction**: What are your reactions? Are you convinced of any conclusions? If there are apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the readings what do you make of them?
3. **Class discussion**: What are the one or two key issues questions or concerns would you particularly like to discuss in class?
International Presentations

During the first class session, I will ask all students to rank their interest in the international cases that we will examine over the course of the semester. Teams of students will present and discuss the social policy, pension and/or health care challenges facing a variety of other countries—as examples, the Canadian health care system, the Chilean pension system, the German long term care system, etc. A two page summary memo on the topic is to be prepared by the team and distributed to the class prior to the presentation.

Mock Agency Crossfire Sessions

During the first class session, I will ask all students to rank their interest in the six crossfire sessions that we will hold over the semester. Teams of students will role-play members of Congress, Administration officials, agency policy analysts and leaders of interest groups at these sessions. A one-page memo is to be written by each crossfire participant and submitted to the class prior to the presentation.

Individual Policy Paper

In lieu of a final examination, each student will develop a 20+ page paper on a specific social policy issue. The topic of the paper must be approved by me before the middle of the semester.

Student Assessment

Student assessments will be based on class participation, written assignments and oral presentations. Before the middle of the semester, the class will decide on the relative weights of the various assignments for the purposes of grading. Below is my proposal for assessment:

- Overall class participation and weekly responses 15%
- Individual policy papers 45%
- International presentations 15%
- Mock Hearings & Crossfires 25%

I will be using the +/- grade system, as approved by the Graduate Assembly. For more information:
http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/student_services/academic_policies/plus_minus.html
Class Schedule and Assignments

1) September 12: Overview & Introduction
General introductions, overview of course and discussion about the implications of living near or below the poverty level. Please read all below before the first class. The ERes password is boat.

Readings:
- US Conference on Catholic Bishops: take the poverty quiz at www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa and take a tour of this “forgotten state” at http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa/tour.htm
- Ehrenreich: Nickled and Dimed, 11-49, (optional, skim) ERes

2) September 19: Understanding Poverty
An examination of Texas, US & international trends in poverty. A discussion of why the poor are poor, and how one’s “answer” to the question may shape policy direction.

Readings:
- Clark: "The Economic Well Being of Older Americans” EAS, pp 36-54, ERes
- Cancian & Reed: “Changes in Family Structure”, pp 69-96 UP
- Corcoran: “Mobility, Persistence and the Consequences of Poverty for Children”, pp 127-161 (skim) UP
- Wilson: When Work Disappears, Chapters 2, 3 & 5, (skim) ERes
- DiNitto: “Why are the Poor, Poor?” Social Welfare, pp 78-85, ERes
- Ellwood: “Values & the Helping Conundrums”, pp 14-44, Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family

3) September 26: Historical Perspectives and Delivery Mechanisms
Brief history of the evolution of social policy in the US. Crossfire on the various alternative models of delivering support, using child care as an example.
Readings:


4) October 3: Is Demography Destiny?
Discussion of the scope and implications of growing diversity in Texas and the nation, as well as a discussion of the scope and implications of aging trends in the US and the world.

Readings:

- Wadlinger: *Strangers at the Gates*, Chapters 2 (pp. 30-53 & 71-73 only), 3 & 5, ERes
- Goodhart: “Discomfort of Strangers”, *Guardian*, 2/20/04, ERes
- Leibfritz and Roseveare: “Aging Populations and Government Budgets”, from OECD Observer, ERes
- *The Economist*: “A Tale of Two Bellies”, ERes
- Estes: “Inequality and Aging” pp 137-163, (optional) ERes
- Peterson: Grey Dawn, pp 27-64 (optional) ERes

An examination of changes in work and income in the US, including international comparisons. Team presentation on US private sector pensions.

Readings:

- Ellwood et al: “Winners and Losers in America”, pp 1-41 AWN
- Galbraith: *Created Unequal*, Chapters 2 & 3, skim, ERes
Freeman: “The Rising Tide Lifts…?” pp 97-126 UP
Kruske: “The New Employee-Employer Relationship”, pp AWN (skim)
Byrnes: “The Benefits Trap” Business Week, ERes
Apfel: Op-Ed “Retirees Losing a Benefit” Dallas Morning News, 8/11/02
Private Pensions and Retiree Health Packet, ERes


Overview and discussion on current issues on Social Security. Team presentation on the Chilean/UK systems and crossfire on whether to privatize/personalize Social Security.

Readings:
- Congressional Budget Office: “Social Security: A Primer”, ERes
- Pozner: “Testimony on Progressive House W/M Committee, 5/12/05, ERes
- Furman: “Evaluating Alternative Social Security Reform Proposals”, House W/M Committee, 5/12/05, ERes
- Reno: “Options to Balance Social Security Over the Next 75 Years”, NASI 2/05, ERes
- Burke et al: Social Security and Medicare, pp127-160 Clinton era; some of these readings relate to Medicare for next week, (optional) ERes
- Chile/UK Pensions Packet, ERes

Readings on Social Security Commission: (all optional)
- President’s Commission: “Strengthening Social Security and Creating Personal Wealth for all Americans”, summary materials, ERes
- Diamond & Orszag: “An Analysis of the Plans Proposed by the President’s Commission”, Executive Summary, ERes
- Blahous: “Problems With the Diamond/Orszag Paper”, ERes
- Diamond & Orszag: “A Response to the Executive Director of the President’s Commission”, ERes
7) October 24: Social Insurance Policy for the Elderly: Medicare
Discussion of Medicare debate and future challenges. Crossfire on Medicare Rx drugs.

Readings:
- McLanahan/Apfel/Fatehi: “Medicare Overview” Draft not for circulation or attribution, ERes
- Herd: “Understanding the Options”, Draft: not for circulation or attribution, ERes
- Butler: “Social Values and Medicare Reform” The Ethics of Medicare Reform, Johns Hopkins U, 2002, ERes
- Feder & Moon: “Can Medicare Survive its Saviors”, The American Prospect, ERes
- Rice: “An Analysis of Reforming Medicare Through a ‘Premium Support’ Program” ERes
- Serafini: “No Cure All”, National Journal, 11/22/03, ERes
- Rx Drugs Reading Packet, ERes
- Burke et al: Social Security and Medicare, pp 71-86 and 127-160, Clinton era; Medicare sections, (optional) ERes

8) October 31: Long Term Care Policy
Discussion of the long-term care challenges facing the nation. Team presentation on the long-term care system in Germany

Readings:
- Clark: “Additional Health Issues: Long Term Care”, pp 316-343, The Economics of an Aging Society, 2004 ERes
- Georgetown University Long Term Care Project Packet, ERes
- Center for Long-Term Care Financing Packet, ERes
- Citizens for Long Term Care, pp 1-20, Kaiser Family Foundation, ERes
- Angel: Who Will Care for Us?, Chapters 6 & 7, pp.113-157, ERes
- Estes: “The Underdevelopment of Community-Based Services in the U.S. Long-Term Care System”, Social Policy & Aging, Chapter 10, pp 201-215, (optional) ERes
- German Long Term Care Packet, ERes
9) November 7: Income Policies for the Poor: Welfare Reform
The history of welfare reform. If you were President in 1996, would you have signed the welfare bill? Crossfire session on two key welfare reauthorization issues: work requirements and efforts to strengthen marriage.

Readings:
- Pavetti: “Welfare Policy in Transition” pp 229-277, UP
- Rector: “Why Congress Must Reform Welfare” Heritage Foundation (skim), ERes ing Bill Clinton Has Done” Atlantic (skim)
- Edelman: “The Worst Th

The current debate: strengthen work requirements and marriage?
- CBPP: TANF Reauthorization in 2005, April 2005, ERes
- Buntin: “Father Time”, Governing, March 2005, ERes
- Parrott Fremstad: “The Senate TANF Reauthorization Bill” CBPP, 5/12/04, ERes

10) November 14: Policies to Support Families and to Help Make Work Pay
Discussion of various programs designed to support working families. International team presentation on the Scandinavian model of family support. Discussion of US disability policy.
Readings:

- Heyman: Work-Family Issues and Low-Income Families, ERes
- King: “Draft Paper of Effectiveness of Training Programs”, ERes
- Apfel: “Should We Establish a System of Mutual Accountabilities for Persons with Disabilities?” OEDC, 2003, ERes
- Scandinavian Family Support Packet, ERes
- Kaiser: “In Finland’s Footsteps”, Washington Post, 8/8/05, ERes

11) November 21: Education policy and Service Integration/Devolution Issues

Discussion of the ongoing efforts to “sort out” federal/state responsibilities in social policy. Should we centralize in the education area and decentralize our income support programs? Discussion of the federal & state roles in preschool and elementary and secondary education. Crossfire session on Administration’s “Superwaiver” proposal.

Readings:

- Rivlin “Rethinking Federalism”, *Reviving the American Dream*, pp 110-125, ERes
- DiNitto: *Social Welfare*, pp 320-355, ERes
• WELPAN: Developing a Workable Cross Systems Waiver Authority: perspective of the WELPAN Network” June 2002, ERes
• President’s Budget: “Superwaiver” pp 35-36, ERes
• Greenstein: “Superwaiver Would Grant Executive Branch and Governors Sweeping Authority to Override Federal Laws” CBPP, 2002, ERes
• Fremstad: “Is the Superwaiver the Only Way?”, CBPP, 2004, ERes
• US Department of Education: “Four Pillars of NCLB”, 2004 ERes
• Jennings: “Knocking on Your Door”, American School Board Journal, September 2002, ERes
• Linn: “Rethinking the No Child Left Behind Accountability System”, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing, U CO Boulder, ERes
• Kafer: “No Child Left Behind: Where Do We Go From Here?”, The Heritage Foundation, July 6, 2004, ERes
• Keller: “Texas School Finance in 2002”, (optional) ERes

12) November 28: Health Policies for the Non-Aged
Discussion of government role in providing/encouraging health insurance for low income and uninsured non-elderly individuals. Congressional hearing on Administration’s health insurance tax-credit proposal.

Readings:
• Iglehart: “The American Health Care System”, ERes
• Apfel: “Health Insurance for the Uninsured”, pp 12-19, LBJ School Journal, Fall 2003 ERes
• Mullahy & Wolfe: “Health Policies for the Non-Elderly Poor”, UP, pp 278-313
• Liska: “Medicaid: Overview of a Complex Program”, Urban Institute, ERes
• Serafini: “Balancing Act”, National Journal, 8/13/05, ERes
• Holohan & Spillman: “Health Care Access for Uninsured Adults”, Urban Institute, (optional) ERes

Readings on Insurance Health Tax Credits:
• Pauly & Herring: “Expanding Coverage via Tax Credits: Trade-offs & Outcomes”, Health Affairs, January 2001, ERes
• Council of Economic Advisors: “Health Insurance Credits”, 2002, ERes
• Park: “Health Insurance Proposals in Administration’s Budget could Weaken the Employer-Based Health Insurance System”, CBPP, 2002, ERes
• Gruber: “Testimony on House Hearing on Health Insurance Tax Credits”, February 13, 2002, ERes
• Owcharenko: “Health Care: Helping the Uninsured”, Agenda 2003: Shaping America’s Future, Heritage Foundation ERes

13) December 5: The Future?
Where we should go from here? In addition, international team presentation on Canadian health care system (a follow-up to last week).

Readings:
• Murdock: “Summary, Implications & Assessment of Alternative Futures”, pp., The Texas Challenge, ERes
• Wilson: “A Broader Vision”, When Work Disappears, Chapter 8, pp. 207-238, ERes
• Blank: Chapter 4, “Enhancing the Opportunities, Skills, and Security of American Workers”, pp 105-123, AWN
• Steurle: “Eight Pathways to the Government We Deserve”, The Urban Institute No. 14, October 1998, ERes
• Niskanen: Chapter 3, “Creating Good Jobs & Good Wages, pp 92-104, AWN

Readings on Health Care:
• Reinhardt: “International Perspectives on Health Policy Reform” pp 161-182, Social Security and Medicare, ERes
• Anderson: “Health Spending in the US and the Rest of the Industrialized World”, Health Affairs: July 2005
• Canada Health Care Packet, ERes