

FHD 6230/7230
Family Social Policy
Spring Semester, 2017

Instructor: Dr. Kathy W. Piercy
e-mail: kathy.piercy@usu.edu
Phone: 435-363-6726
Class: Thursdays 9-11:30 a.m. in the Gunshed Classroom
Office Hours: By appointment

Textbooks: *Family Policy Matters*, 3rd Edition. (2014) by Karen Bogenschneider
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publisher

Other assigned readings will be posted to Canvas or available via electronic journals from our library.

Course Description: This course explores the reciprocal linkages between family functioning and public/private policies at state, local, federal, and international levels. Students explore how families contribute to and are affected by problems, as well as whether and how families should be involved in policy solutions. Students assess the consequences policies may have for family well-being through exploration of specific policies, including those of their choice.

Course Objectives: Students are expected to:

- Critically examine theoretical orientations for conceptualizing family policy and for connecting research and policymaking.
- Gain an understanding of how policy is influenced by demographic change, values, attitudes, and perceptions of the well-being of children and families, both nationally and internationally.
- Apply a family perspective to policy analysis by assessing current policy issues in terms of their sensitivity to and supportiveness of diverse families.
- Explore the roles professionals can play in conducting family policy research, and in formulating and implementing policies that strengthen families across the life cycle.
- Examine how these roles can be implemented using an educational or advocacy approach.
- Think critically and enhance communication skills for developing and expressing clear logical arguments for policymakers, professionals, and the public.

Course Philosophy:

I encourage students to consider policies from the perspectives of *families* rather than individuals. That is not easy to do in an individualistic society! We will read across the political spectrum, and compare U.S. family policies with those of other nations. My goal is NOT to have you espouse *my* political views or policy choices; rather, it is for you to explore fully a range of political perspectives to determine your own views on current family issues and policies. You will have ample opportunities to pursue knowledge on issues about which you feel passionately! There is no right or wrong answer on *some* of the assignments. Instead students are evaluated on ability to articulate their viewpoints, identify theoretical underpinnings, support views with *empirical* findings, and refute alternative views. Gaining a historical perspective on policies that affect families is also helpful in proposing changes to current policies.

Requirements:

Participating in Class Discussion (15 points). Regular class attendance and participation is required. Each week students are assigned supplementary and text readings. These assignments should be read before class so students can participate fully in the discussion. The class will be structured much like a study group in which a group of people grapple with ideas. Each student is responsible for teaching others in the class, assuming responsibility for locating resources, findings answers to questions that arise, and being prepared for class as part of an obligation to one's own learning and that of others (15 points).

Leading Class Discussion. (15 points) Once this semester, students will take responsibility for leading the class in a discussion of a family topic and several assigned readings. The weeks available for this assignment are 7-8, 10-11, and 15. You will provide an additional article for your classmates to read in your chosen week. I need to post this article to Canvas no later than Monday at noon **the week of** your discussion. Coordinate with the instructor the week in which you will lead the class discussion. You may pose a series of questions for class to discuss, offer your interpretation of the readings and solicit class member interpretations of the readings, supplement our readings with a brief presentation, or use any creative device for leading the discussion. Such discussions should last an hour.

Family Policy Issue Analysis and Policymaker Interview (30 points; each part is worth 15 points).

Students are expected to keep up to date on current policy issues being debated or decided in local, state or federal government; executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government; businesses; advocacy groups; or nonprofit organizations from a daily newspaper (i.e. *Salt Lake Tribune or Deseret News, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post*) or a weekly magazine (i.e. *Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report*). Choose an article on a current policy issue from one of these sources to read and write a report. **Do not read anecdotal or human interest articles to fulfill this assignment.**

Part 1

For this part of the assignment, write a 3-4-page summary of the article using this format:

- Title and source of the article (the news story must be attached for grading)
- Summary of the article that is accurate, but does not plagiarize (5 points)
- Policy implications for families (5 points)
- Your own reaction based upon class readings, and your personal experiences or values

Part 2

Interview a legislator, councilman/woman, or public servant (mayor, county executive, or agency administrator) who shares an interest in your chosen issue. Develop a list of questions to ask; aim to keep the interview within an hour (they are very busy people). The questions should center around their understanding of and views on the issue you've defined in Part 1, and what information they would need to bring forward policy changes to the relevant body of lawmakers, councils, etc. with whom they work. Ask if there are other issues (and if so, what they are) that influence bringing forward policy proposals in your given area of interest. Provide the instructor with a 2-page summary of the key points of this interview.

A key issue is to identify and contact potential interviewees as soon as you've completed part one of this assignment. If your target is a state legislator, you may have to wait until the legislative session is concluded here in UT (that's around March 15, so after our Spring Break). Let me know if help is needed to identify a suitable interviewee.

Views of a Controversial Family Policy (40 points). Prepare a typed 8-10-page paper, plus references, on a policy issue of your choice.

- Describe the problem that you will address, what policies already exist, and what policy options are being considered. (10 points)
- Contrast how the concerned, sanguine, and impatient perspectives would approach this issue (10 points)
- Using the theory of paradox, discuss whether and how the issue could benefit from each of these perspectives (10 points)
- Explain why the issue has been controversial and what it would take to move the issue forward (10 points)

Family Impact Analysis (70 points). This is a two-part assignment, and can be done in pairs. The pair gets one grade.

1. Write a 10-12-page family impact analysis of an issue, a specific law, a legislative proposal, or program, per the following format:
 - Using the family impact principles how can or are families being supported in this issue, law, legislation, or program? (10 points)
 - Using the family impact principles, discuss how families can or might be undermined by this issue, law, legislation, or program. (10 points)

- Are there beneficial effects that might have been overlooked without family impact analysis? Are there harmful effects that a family impact analysis might help avoid? (10 points)
 - What questions should policymakers ask when making decisions on the topic of your analysis? (10 points)
2. Write a 2-page (500-word) brief for policymakers summarizing your findings. Explain to policymakers why this issue is important, what impacts it has on family well-being, how this issue might be approached using the family impact lens, and what family considerations policymakers might want to consider when developing their views on this issue or enacting legislation. This assignment must be approached from an education perspective. (30 points)

Course Grading:

Assignments will be graded primarily on what is said (content), but also on how it is said (e.g., grammar, clarity, and organization). Some assignments will be assessed based on the accessibility (the ability to write) for lay audiences.

University Honor Code: The honor code will be strictly enforced in this course. All aspects of your course work are covered by the honor system. I expect each student to be aware of and familiar with its requirements and penalties. Any suspected violations of the honor code will be promptly reported to the honor system. Plagiarism is not tolerated. For additional information, check the following website:

<http://www.usu.edu/student-services/pdf/StudentCode.pdf>

APA Format: The use of APA style 6th edition is **required** in the preparation of written assignments. I expect that each student understands APA guidelines for reference citations, reference lists, and the like. If this is not the case, I recommend that you carefully review the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*.

Electronic Devices: All electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, and laptop computers should be turned off during class.

Physical Impairments: Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with notice.

Suggested Websites for Issues discussed in class and paper assignments

1. Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) www.clasp.org
2. Center for the Study of Social Policy (www.cssp.org)
3. The Urban Institute www.urban.org
4. National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy www.teenpregnancy.org/
5. Utah Marriage Organization <http://StrongerMarriage.org/>
6. MDRC www.mdrc.org Nonpartisan policy research organization dedicated to learning how to improve well being of low income people.
7. Children’s Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org
8. The Heritage Foundation <http://www.heritage.org/>
9. The Cato Institute <http://www.cato.org/>
10. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov;>
11. Administration on Children and Families www.acf.hhs.gov
12. COFACE: Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union. <http://www.coface-eu.org>
13. Pew Research Center www.pewresearch.org

Table of Assignments and Due Dates:

Points	Assignment	Due Date
30	Participating in/Leading Class Discussion	Leading Discussion TBD
15	Issue Analysis Part 1	February 4
15	Issue Analysis Part 2	April 14
40	Views of Controversial Family Policy	March 3
70	Family Impact Analysis	April 29
170	Total Points	

Schedule of Topics and Deadlines (subject to change)

Week 1	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1-12	Introduction to Family Policy		Download and Read syllabus What would you like to learn?
Week 2			
1-19	History of Family Policy: Policymakers & Policy Process	Chs. 10 & 11 (Bogenschneider text) The State of American Jobs (through p. 19)	Think about this question: Why do you think Donald Trump won the presidency?
Week 3			
1-26	Defining & Providing a Rationale for Family Policy	Chs. 1, 2, 3 (B text)	
Week 4			
2-02	Individualism vs. Collectivism	Chs. 4 & 5 (B text) Pew Report: Parenting in America Read only 1. The American Family Today pp. 15-26	Issue Analysis Part 1 Due 2-04
Week 5			
2-09	Societal Shaping of Families and Why Families should be a Focus of U.S. Policy	Chs. 6 & 7 (B text)	
Week 6			
2-16	Intro to Family Impact Lens & Theoretical Approaches for Bridging the Controversy	Chs. 8 & 9 (B text) Concerned Camp: <i>Facilitating Forever: A Report from the National Marriage Project</i> Satisfied Camp: Cherlin (2009) Impatient Camp: Roll & East (2012); Smith (1993)	
Week 7			
2-23	Family Formation Policies	Duvander & Ferrarini (2013); & Brainerd (pronatalist policies) Discussion Leader Adds Reading	*Discuss/decide on topic(s) for wk. 15

Week 8			
3-02	Work Family Balance Policies	Family-Friendly Policy: Lessons from Europe Part II; Closing the Gender Gap-Summary Trends in Parental Leave in Nordic Countries (Eydal et al., 2015) Discussion Leader Adds Reading	Views of Controversial Family Policy Due 3/03
Week 9 Spring Break Week			
Week 10			
3-16	Early Childhood Education Policies	http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/02/opinion/the-business-case-for-early-childhood-education.html?_r=0 Brookings Brief: How Much Could We Improve ...? Mitchell (2015). Shifting Directions in ECED policy... Discussion Leader Adds Reading	
Week 11			
3-23	Poverty: Theoretical Models & Policy Alternatives	Section on <i>Poverty</i> : in Pathways: Poverty & Inequality Report; <i>Introduction</i> to Hamilton Project document Early Life Origins of Life-Cycle Well-Being... Discussion Leader Adds Reading	
Week 12			
3-30	Health & Caregiving Policies	Economic Consequences of Aging: The Case of Finland; National Health Insurance: A Brief History in the U.S.; Experience, Knowledge, and Concerns about Long Term Care Services and Supports	http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/10/upshot/the-future-of-obamacare-looks-bleak.html?_r=0
Week 13			
4-06	Family Impact Lens Toolkit; Discuss Final Paper	Ch. 12 (B Text)	
Week 14			
4-13	Getting Involved: Educ or Advocacy; Careers in Policy	Chs. 14 & 15	Issue Analysis Part 2 due 4-14

Week 15 4-20	Final Issue: Topic of Students' Choice	Readings TBA Discussion Leader Adds Reading	
Week 16 4-27	Class will not meet		Final Due Date for Family Impact Analysis Due 4/29