

**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Family and Consumer Sciences**  
**FCS 333 Family and Consumer Public Policy (3 credits)**

**Time & Place:** Wednesday, 5:30 – 8:20 p.m., Room 201, Turner Hall

**Instructor:** Dr. Deborah B. Gentry, Ed.D, CFLE, CFCS  
Office: 143C Turner (Office of the Dean of CAST)  
Phone: 438-8748 (office), Email: dgentry@ilstu.edu  
Office hours: Typically, Wednesdays, 2-3:00 p.m, or by appointment

**Course description:**

Examination of public and private sector programs serving human needs: role of family and consumer science professionals in the public policy arena.

**Course objectives:**

Successful completion of this course will enable the student to:

- Understand the definitions, approaches, and issues involved in family policy analyses across the life cycle;
- Analyze **processes for formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policy** and the role of family and consumer sciences professionals in these processes;
- Analyze and synthesize **public policy/legislative action affecting families** and consumers;
- Promote a greater understanding of responsible **democratic processes**;
- Interpret **current societal trends** as they relate to the need for public policies addressing the family and consumer;
- Identify and assess **programs in governmental and private agencies** that are designed to address the needs of families and consumers;
- Demonstrate professional skills for **public policy involvement**, including problem solving and management of public discussions;
- Examine an issue, analyze its implications, and formulate a position.

**Text and other readings:**

Borgenschneider, Karen. *Family Policy Matter: How Policymaking Affects Families and What Professionals Can Do*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers: Mahwah, NJ. 2006.

*Public Policy Through a Family Lens: Sustaining Families in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. National Council on Family Relations: Minneapolis, MN. 2000.

One of several choices of books/novels written by persons (or someone else on their behalf) about their pursuit of policy formation or change relevant to a personal or familial need/stressor/crisis. For example, *Nickel and Dimed*; *Bait and Switch*; *Fast Food Nation*; *Reefer Madness*; *A Boy Called "It"*; *Are You There Alone?: The Unspeakable Crime of Andrea Yates*; or *The Spirit Catches You When You Fall Down*.

Other supplementary reading materials will be distributed by the instructor or placed on reserve at Milner Library. For example, fact sheets and policy briefs prepared by the National Council on Family Relations, or *Family and Community Policy: Strategies for Civic Engagement* edited by Carol L. Anderson

**Course Policies and Requirements:**

**Attendance** is expected. If there is a legitimate reason why you cannot attend class, please let the instructor know ahead of time. You are responsible for all materials you miss in class. Class lectures will cover material not in the text and you will be responsible for this material on the exams.

**Conduct:** Be honest and respectful at all times. Be honest on assignments, exams, etc. and respectful during class discussions and activities. We may, at times, be discussing controversial and personal issues during this class. It is very important that we all strive to honestly present our own viewpoint, while carefully listening to and respecting differing viewpoints. It is okay to disagree with other classmates and with the instructor; just as the instructor may disagree with you! It does not mean that she is playing favorites or that she does not respect your opinion. Argumentation is the basis upon which public policy is developed in the country. Freedom of expression means we can respectfully agree to disagree! Our goal is to build a caring community within this classroom where we can all further our knowledge and learn from each other.

**Readings:** You are responsible for reading the day’s assignment before you come to class. This will enable us to have interesting class discussions.

**Academic Dishonesty:** If you commit academic dishonesty, the Student Judicial Office will be notified and a final grade of F in the course will be recommended. Some forms of academic dishonesty include cheating on examinations, plagiarism (presenting the work of others as you own) or falsification of records such as sources used to write papers.

**Grading/Exams:** Students are expected to take exams and turn in assignments at the scheduled time. Exceptions will only be made for serious personal illness or family emergency. No extra credit assignments will be given.

**Course Evaluation:**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Two examinations.....	200
Observation and summary of meeting.....	50
Public forum- group presentation.....	150
Class discussion/participation in and outside of class	50
Letter to policy maker .....	50
Final examination .....	100
<b>Total points .....</b>	<b>600</b>

The final grade will be determined from a possible 600 points:

- A..... 600-540 points
- B..... 539-480 points
- C..... 479-420 points
- D..... 419-360 points
- F..... less than 419 points

## Course Schedule\*

### Field trip\*\*

Date	Topic	Textbook Reading Assignment	Notes
W 1/___	Introduction Rationale for Family Policy	Prefaces Chapter 1	
W 1/___	Rationale for Family Policy	Chapters 2 & 3	
W 1/___	Rationale for Family Policy	Chapters 4 & 5	
W 2/___	Applying a Family Perspective	Chapter 8 Guest speaker: Lobbyist	Supplementary readings are to be consulted
W 2/___	Applying a Family Perspective	Chapters 6 & 7	Supplementary readings are to be consulted
W 2/___			Exam 1
W 2/___	Policy Formation	Chapters 9 & 10	Supplementary readings are to be consulted
W 3/___	Policy Formation	Chapter 11	
W 3/___	Spring Break		
W 3/___	Strategies for Involvement	Chapter 12 Book/novel appropriate to lay audience	--Literature circle discussion --Summary of meeting/hearing observation due
W 3/___	Strategies for Involvement	Chapter 13 Book appropriate to lay audience Guest speaker: ISU American Democracy Project Coordinator	--Literature circle discussion
W 3/___	Strategies for Involvement	Chapters 14 & 15 Book appropriate to lay audience Guest speaker: State legislator	--Letter due --Literature circle discussion
W 4/___			Exam 2
W 4/___	Public Forum Simulations- Group Presentations (2)		
W 4/___	Public Forum Simulation- Group Presentations (2)		
W 4/___	Public Forum Simulation- Group Presentations (2)		
W 5/___		Chapter 16	Final Exam

\*Subject to change

\*\*A field trip to Springfield is being planned. Students should make every effort possible to attend. To partially compensate for time devoted to experience this field trip, 1/\_\_\_, 2/\_\_\_, 2/\_\_\_, and 4/\_\_\_ will be shorter class periods than usual.

**Assignments:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the given date. Points will be taken off for each day the assignment is late at a rate of ~10% of total possible points per day. Students need to keep an electronic file of all assignments for the duration of the semester. No handwritten work will be accepted.

**Letter Writing Assignment.** Select a cause, program, or pending legislation that you personally believe is important and upon which the government's policies have some affect. Write a 1-2 page letter to the appropriate public official (elected or appointed) at the local, state, or national level to express your views and ask for her/his support. The letter will not be mailed until after it has been graded by the instructor, and revised if deemed necessary. Be sure to keep an electronic file of the letter so that you can make necessary edits prior to mailing. Provide a properly addressed and stamped envelope. The instructor will mail. Letter is worth 50 points and is due on **Wednesday, March \_\_**.

**Meeting/Hearing Observation.** Attend a meeting which involves/impacts public policy at the local, state or national level. Possibilities for meetings include: school board, zoning, town council, or legislative meetings, political forums or nonprofit organization board meetings. Prepare a 2-3 page summary of the meeting which includes the following information:

- Title of the meeting/hearing, date, location, and sponsorship
- Type of audience, individual names (if available), approximate number of individuals
- Structure of meeting/hearing, including the decision-making process
- Names of presenters, identified issue, your perspective of their credibility
- Summary of issues discussed
- Effectiveness of presenters
- Productiveness of the meeting
- Comment of the role of the media (if applicable)
- Implications for family policy
- Follow-up to the meeting

Summary is worth 50 points and is due on **Wednesday, March \_\_**.

**Field trip to Springfield, IL.** A weekday field trip (date yet to be determined) is being planned. The goal will be to see the state legislature in action.

**Public Forum Simulation - Group Presentation.** Students will be assigned to groups during the second week of class. Each group will be assigned a topic and will have most of the semester to prepare a group presentation which will include classmate/"audience" participation. A 2-3 page "fact sheet" will be prepared by group members for distribution to "audience" members. Additional details about this assignment will be provided by the instructor in handout separate from this syllabus. Public Forum Simulations - Group Presentations will be held the last three weeks of class and are worth 150 points.

**Participation points.** Participation points can be earned in a variety of ways, including: contributing to discussion in class (small group and pair dialogue, asking questions of guest speakers, being an engaged "audience" member in simulated town meeting presentations, "literacy circle" activities regarding selected book), bringing in newspaper/magazine clippings, researching progress (via internet) of pieces of legislation, and attending the field trip to Springfield.