

**FHD 4230 Families and Social Policy
Spring Semester, 2003**

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Class: T 4:30 - 7 p.m.
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Textbooks: 1. All Our Families 2nd Edition by Mason, Skolnick, & Sugarman (Eds.)
2. A second text may be ordered-TBA

Course Objectives:

To give students an overview of theoretical and substantive issues related to the development and implementation of family policies. Emphasis is given to the connections among family policies, social welfare, family well-being, and political culture. We will examine current economic and political forces that influence federal and state governments in developing and enforcing key areas of legislation, and the impact of policy on citizens and their families.

Requirements:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with course material through completion of short quizzes, 9 brief papers (or 6 brief papers and 1 group project), plus one current event assignment. Because 3 quiz grades can be dropped, **no make up quizzes are offered.**

Grading:

Students earn points for each required assignment. Points are totaled and a final grade determined by curving the total scores. My curves are not strict Bell curves. The group project earns one grade, applied to all group members.

Course Requirements:

Professional Conduct: I view all college courses as *preparation for your career*. Therefore, I expect you to display professional behavior in this class.

Attendance is required. Assignments must be submitted in class on the due date. You are expected to participate in all class activities and discussions. This means that I expect you to stay in the classroom at all times other than scheduled breaks. When participating in class discussions, be respectful of

others? views and comment only on ideas expressed by others. This practice is especially important in this class because there are many sides to the issues that we will discuss. I want to encourage you to express a variety of opinions on the topics. Finally, be prepared to answer questions I pose during class for discussion, as I shall call on specific persons for contributions during class discussions.

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. For additional information, check the following website:
<http://www.usu.edu/stuserv/scode/index.html>

Readings: Complete assigned readings before the class scheduled for discussion of the materials. Be prepared to ask and answer questions and participate fully in class activities. Only some of my class lectures will follow the assigned readings closely. Most of my lectures present additional material based on the assumption that you have gained a good background from the text. Some of the readings may be placed on electronic reserve and will be so noted in the syllabus or announced in class.

Student Evaluation: Make-up assignments and extra credit are **not** options in this course. Attend class regularly, plan your time wisely, and turn in all work on the **due** date. Note that the system for determining final grades is based on the class distribution of total points earned over the semester. Do not compute percentages, as I do not use them in determining final grades. In general, the only way to ?fail? a particular assignment is to fail to attend class, participate actively, turn in required assignments, or take the test. Students who approach the course professionally--attend, participate, and complete all assignments and exams--pass the course, and *many* receive a grade of B or better.

APA Format: The use of APA style is **required** in the preparation of all written assignments. Because this is an upper division class, I expect that each student has at least a rudimentary understanding of APA guidelines for reference citations, reference lists, and the like. If this is not the case, I recommend that you review the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition.

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

Academic Crimes: In a nutshell: Do not **cheat**, do not **plagiarize**, and do not **conspire**. If you don't know what these terms mean, consult the instructor. But, ignorance is no excuse, and evidence of any of these crimes will warrant penalty

and possible dismissal from the course.

Physical Impairments: If a student has any physical disabilities or other problems that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, make these known to the instructor during the first week of the course. Any requests for special considerations relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, and so forth must be discussed with and approved by the instructor prior to completion of the fifth day of the course. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative formats—large print, audio, and Braille.

Protect Your Work: Use a diskette to protect and backup each of your assignments as you work on them. Better yet, make 2 disk copies to ensure protection. Mark and keep hard copies of everything you turn into me. Electronic failures or crashed disks will **not** be accepted as a reason for turning in assignments late.

Course Assignments

1. **Quizzes** (10 points each, 50 points total). Instead of large tests, we will have a series of short quizzes about every other week. Eight quizzes will be given and the highest 5 scores will count towards the final grade. The quizzes will test your knowledge of the assigned readings for that date, so you **must read ahead**. Quizzes are written to test for an understanding of the material as well as an ability to apply concepts. Quiz structure is most often multiple choice and true/false; a few may consist of a short essay question. Quizzes are given in the first 15 minutes of class. If you show up for class 10 minutes late, you'll have just 5 minutes to complete the quiz.
2. **Brief Paper Assignments** (10 points each; 60 or 90 points, depends on the option you select). Instead of a long term paper, students will write either six or nine 1 page papers on topics assigned in class. Each paper must be typed and single-spaced. Each paper should bear a brief heading including your name, the paper number (1,2, etc.), and the title of your paper. (Do not include the course name or number, or the instructor's name; we all know that information!) Papers will not be accepted late! Any person who does not turn in a paper by the due date will have a 0 recorded for that assignment. There are no exceptions.
3. **Issue Debates {available to only 25 students on first come, first serve basis}**. (30 points) An option for those of you who would prefer to write 6 papers instead of 9 is to hold an issue debate. It is available only to the first 25 students who form groups of 5 each. The instructor must be given names and email addresses of all group members as groups form. Any topic not on the syllabus must be approved well in advance by the instructor. All debate teams

must be formed by January 21 so that they can be held as scheduled.

Each group of five students will hold a debate on one of the following issues listed below. Two speakers take one side of the issue, two speakers take the opposing side of the issue, and 1 person serves as moderator and reference-collector. At the conclusion of the debate, the class may then join in a discussion of the issues **led by the debate team**.

Here are the issues available to debate:

1. Be it resolved that **paid** parental leave for family issues such as birth of children or elder care is government-mandated.
2. Be it resolved that no fault divorce statutes be abolished or amended to make divorce more difficult to obtain.
3. Be it resolved that the majority of government resources used to fight drug abuse be allocated to prevention and treatment, rather than interdiction (stopping the flow of illegal drugs into the U.S.).
4. Panel discussion: What programs would you recommend to assist immigrant families? Both existing exemplary programs and proposed programs can be included.
5. Be it resolved that all engaged couples should be required to take a premarital education class before marriage.

The role of the moderator is to introduce the participants and topic, keep track of time and to organize/facilitate the presentation process. The moderator is responsible for keeping debaters and cross-examiners within the suggested time frame. The moderator is also responsible for getting written summaries of the key points covered by the debaters to the cross-examiner **prior to** the class presentation date, and compiling the final reference list.

Each group is required to hand in a typed, one-two page outline on the date of their scheduled presentation, along with a list of references and resources utilized for the project. Group members are responsible for giving this information to the moderator **well in advance** of the presentation. Moderators are responsible for compiling the outline and reference list. Please use APA style when compiling your reference list. Debates (about 30 minutes long) will be evaluated based on creativity, content, clarity, organization and overall flow. However, please do **not** take the approach of **style over substance**.

4. **Current Events Assignment** (10 points). For this assignment, I want you to attend a public meeting at which policy is deliberated and made. This can include a meeting of a city or county council, planning commission, or the state legislature (which is in session in January, T-F). You can call the city or county offices to get a list of meeting dates/times/place for this semester. Make notes

about which issues were discussed, what outcomes were reached, and who were key players in the process of deliberation of issues. What did you learn about the policy-making process from this experience? What were your reactions to this process?

On either 2/25 or 4/15, you give a 3-minute oral report to class about your experiences at the meeting, using the questions above to frame your report. On the day of your oral report, turn in a single sheet with your name, the name of the meeting you attended, its date, time, place, and the focus of the policy(ies) discussed at the meeting. This assignment is required for all students. If you have a special circumstance that does not allow for your attendance at such a meeting at any time during this semester, please notify the instructor, who will provide an alternate assignment. You must provide evidence of a special circumstance that warrants the alternative assignment.

	Point Totals
Quizzes	50
Papers (includes alternate [debate] assignment)	90
Current Event Assignment	<u>10</u>
Total Points	150

Suggested Websites for Issues discussed in class and paper/debate assignments

1. Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) www.clasp.org
2. Social Policy Action Network (SPAN) www.span-online.org
3. Center for the Study of Social Policy www.cssp.org
4. The Urban Institute www.urban.org
5. Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org
6. American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) www.aypf.org

Schedule of Topics and Deadlines (subject to change)

Week 1	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1-7	Class introduction Policy Development	Politics and Social Welfare Policy (e reserve)	
Week 2			
1-14	Policy Players	Participants on the inside of Government (e reserve)	
Week 3			
1-21	Political Systems	TBA	Quiz #1
			Paper #1
Week 4			
1-28	Work/Family Issues	Mason, Ch. 9	Debate #1
		Mason, Ch. 10	
Week 5			
2-4	Welfare Reform	Readings on reserve ⁱ	Quiz #2
		Readings on reserve	Paper #2
Week 6			
2-11	Divorce	Mason, Ch. 4	Quiz #3
	Stepfamilies	Mason, Ch. 5	Debate #2
Week 7	President's Day Holiday—No Class this week		
Week 8			
2-25	Child Custody	Readings on reserve ⁱⁱ	Paper #3/4
	Parental Kidnapping	Mason, Ch. 8	Policy Meeting Reports
Week 9			
3-4	Substance Abuse	Readings on Reserve ⁱⁱⁱ	Quiz # 4
		Video: Prevention Programs	Debate #3
Week 10	Spring Break - No Classes		
Week 11			
3-18	Teen Pregnancy	Mason, Ch. 3	Quiz #5
	Adoption	Articles on Reserve ^{iv}	Paper 5
Week 12			
3-25	Child Welfare	Mason, Ch. 12	Paper 6
Week 13			
4-1	Immigrant Families	Mason, Ch. 11	Quiz #6
			Guest lecturer

Week 14	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
4-8	New Family Issues	Mason, Ch. 13	Group #4: Panel discussion on Programs for Immigrant Families Paper 7
Week 15 4-15	Criminal and Juvenile Justice	Articles on Reserve ^v	Quiz #7
		Articles on Reserve ^{vi}	Paper 8 Policy Meeting Reports
Week 16			
4-22	Strengthening Marriage & Families	Articles on Reserve ^{vii}	Quiz #8
			Paper 9 Debate #5

Paper Assignments

PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1 POLICY PLAYERS

Several of your readings on reserve discuss the policy players inside and outside of government. Please compare and contrast the goals, agendas, and ethical frameworks of both types of “players.” Who are they, what do they do, and which are most important and why? Be specific, don’t just say “so and so is most important.” Give solid reasons for your arguments, and use references to readings to support them.

PAPER ASSIGNMENT #2 Work and Families

Cowan and Cowan discuss the stresses associated with the transition to parenthood in Ch.8 of All Our Families. You are asked to design a program for new parents that will help them to minimize stresses and prevent marital conflict associated with their new roles. Think about what you would want in a program like this one. Then describe the purpose and goals of your new program and give it a name. How many sessions would you hold, on what topics and with whom would you work (individuals, couples, both, extended family, etc.)?

Where should such a program be taught (health department, mental health center, other facility) and why? Think about a setting that would maximize participation. How should such a program be funded? State or local funds, private pay, combination of both, foundation grant, etc. Who do you most want to reach? Are there at-risk populations that you would target? If so, what are they?

PAPER ASSIGNMENT #3/4 WELFARE REFORM

Now that you are acquainted with recent Welfare Reform, I would like you to take a position on the issue. Argue for or against current welfare reform efforts, addressing the following questions:

1. In general, has the reform generated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act been beneficial to society? Why or why not? Give at least 3 reasons.

2. Whose interests are best served by the current welfare requirements—the poor themselves, their families, taxpayers, etc.? Is anyone particularly disadvantaged by the current requirements? If so, who are they and what might be done to assist them? Be very concrete in your answers and support them with outside sources.
3. Do you agree with Utah's 36 month lifetime limit? Why or why not? On the basis of your readings and the guest speaker comments, do you foresee a need to change any regulations or a need to make exceptions to the 36 month limit? If so, which regulations may need change or 'fine tuning?'

You may incorporate your answers in essay form or answer each question one by one. Be sure you address all parts of all questions. You must cite at least 3 sources to support your arguments in this paper. One may be an article from your text; the other two may come from material I have placed on reserve in the Merrill Library and/or an Internet source. If you aren't sure that an Internet source is reputable, print it and I'll review it in advance of the due date of your paper.

This paper must be two pages long, single space and counts as **2 papers or 20 points**.

PAPER #5

Preventing Divorce, Strengthening Marriage, or Government, "Get out!"

In recent years, political efforts to make divorce more difficult to obtain have taken the form of covenant marriage (now offered in 3 states). Others have suggested that a more achievable goal is to strengthen marriage by use of premarital education or various supportive services for newlywed couples. You can take one of four positions in this paper: 1) we need to make divorce more difficult to obtain; or 2) we need to focus efforts on strengthening marriage; or 3) we need to do both; or 4) the state has no business in trying to affect marriage and divorce. Take one of these 4 positions and discuss why you recommend this position. Give at least 3 reasons, and support your reasons with references. If choosing options 1-3, describe the initiatives you would propose and why you are proposing them (what would they accomplish and why that is important). I have placed a couple of articles about covenant marriage on electronic reserve. You can find plenty of information on these topics on the internet sources listed in this syllabus on p. 6.

PAPER # 6

Teen Pregnancy

Policy makers address teen pregnancy primarily by focusing on sex education programs. In the chapter on teen pregnancy in *All Our Families*, Mauldon argues that much more is needed to address the needs of poor teens who may view such pregnancies as *positive* rather than *negative* events.

What is your opinion on the matter? As a potential policy maker, do you see future efforts as concentrated in sex education programs? Or would you argue that several types of programs might be needed? Explain your position and your reasons (at least 2) for it.

If you chose to concentrate on sex education, discuss which kind of program you favor (abstinence, abstinence plus, other) and why you favor it. If you believe that other approaches are needed, discuss what some of those would be. What do you propose?

Some of you may find the following web sites helpful in writing this paper:

<http://www.hec.ohio-state.edu/famlife/prevent/guidea.htm>
<http://www.hec.ohio-state.edu/famlife/bulletin/volume.3/bull34xx.htm>

This first site is a report entitled “Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention: A Practitioner’s Guide.”

The second site has links to several documents on teen pregnancy issues and prevention programs.

There are many other resources in both the library and on the internet. Use at least 2 sources for this paper.

PAPER #7

Child Welfare

Please read the following article, which can be accessed on electronic reserve at the Merrill Library.

Phillips, S., & Bloom, B. (1998). In whose best interest? The impact of changing public policy on relatives caring for children with incarcerated parents. Child Welfare, 77(5), 531-542.

This paper examines the intersections among criminal justice, welfare (cash assistance) and child welfare systems that occur when parents are incarcerated and other family members are called upon to care for the incarcerated parents' children. After reading the article, please answer the following questions in your paper:

1. What were your immediate reactions to what you read in the article? Which issue or concern described did the best job of getting your attention?
2. The paper describes the dilemma of grandparents who must weigh the potential benefits (particularly financial) of entering the foster care system with the possible risks of doing so (alleging abuse against one's own child, failure to qualify as a foster parent, being asked to adopt the children). This raises a broader question of how much control we citizens want the 'state' to have in the lives of its families. For example, is it sufficient to provide supportive services (including money) to grandparent caregivers who need it or should policymakers require them to go through the child welfare system in order to receive such services? What are your views and on what basis do you maintain your position?
3. Finally, based on the knowledge you have gained in this class and in relevant experiences gained outside this classroom, try to answer the question raised by the authors at the end of the paper. The question appears just before the Notes section and is worded "Whose best interest do they serve?"

PAPER # 8 Juvenile Justice

In this paper, I want you to answer the question "should juvenile defendants be *treated* as adults by the criminal justice system?" Should they be tried as adults and incarcerated with adult prisoners? Under what circumstances, if any, should they be eligible for life sentences? What are the reasons that you feel the way that you do—give at least 3 reasons.

Be sure you cite others' work in this paper. You may draw from the guest lecturers in class on juvenile justice, or many articles that address this topic in scholarly journals or internet sites. I expect a minimum of 3 citations in this paper because I want you to think and read broadly, rather than relying on just one source for your ideas.

Finally, describe briefly an idea that you have that focuses on preventing or reducing the rate of juvenile crime.

PAPER # 9

Topic of Student's Choice

Write about a social issue that needs attention by policy makers or about an existing policy that needs modification (i.e., paid leave for workers, child custody decisions). Describe the issue or policy briefly and state reasons why you think change or attention is needed.

Offer three possible solutions for change. If you propose law, state whether or not it is state or federal law. Programs should also be designated as local, state or federal in scope. Again, describe them well so that it is clear to the reader what you think could be done.

Finally, discuss some potential or real 'stumbling blocks' to the enactment of policy changes in this area.

I expect three references for this paper, due on the last day of class.

ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENT to Paper 9 only

Do a poster collage of a social issue for which policy is made (or should be made in your opinion). Depict both the issue and the kind(s) of policy that you favor.

The collage should be on standard size poster board and can include drawings, newspaper/magazine clippings, text, poetry and other appropriate media (and your name, of course). If you choose this option, you may work with one other classmate and submit the poster together for one grade.

Your poster is due on the last day of class. You may 'exhibit' it during the class period if you wish.

Paper Grading Criteria

Each paper is worth 10 points, unless noted otherwise. The criteria for grading are as follows:

Form (worth 3 points total)

Appropriate Heading (follow directions given in this syllabus) (1 point)

Spelling, Grammar, Sentence Structure, Punctuation (1 point)

Use of correct APA format (1 point)

Content (worth 7 points total)

Introduction of topic-Did you state clearly the purpose or objectives of your paper? 1 point

Body of paper/position/argument-Was your position/argument clearly outlined and properly supported? 3 points

Conclusion-Did you provide a closing statement that summarizes and synthesizes your key points? 2 points

Source material-Did you use 3 academic/scholarly references for your paper? Your text or assigned readings may count as 1 source. No more than one internet source is allowed.

1 point

ENDNOTES FOR READINGS:

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- i. Social Welfare, Parts 1 and 2, on electronic reserve
 - ii. Joint Custody, on electronic reserve
 - iii. Basic Information on Drugs, plus Drug Policy Papers 1 and 2, on electronic reserve
 - iv. "Unwed Parents' Rights" and "Community Assessments of Adoption Issues," on electronic reserve
 - v. Women filing assault charges on an intimate partner: Criminal justice outcome. . . on electronic reserve
 - vi. Juvenile Justice Notes 1-4, on electronic reserve
 - vii. Read "Prevention articles" on electronic reserve; consists of 4 separate articles that address varied

issues