

HDCF 425 – FAMILY LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY (3 CREDITS)
SPRING SEMESTER 2007
2:10-3:25 P.M. TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS
WIL 1130

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Course Description

This course examines the impact of government laws, policies, and programs on family life using a cross-national perspective. The course emphasizes the current state of families—or family trends—and the implications of such trends for family policy. We also explore the varied effects that policies and programs can have on different types of families and different aspects of family functioning and well-being. The course challenges students to get involved in the policy process and to begin advocating for family policies that are important to them. The course also challenges students to conduct family impact analyses in order to understand the intended and unintended consequences of policies for families. The course concludes with an examination of policy-related outcomes and attempts to answer the question, “Does family policy matter?” Comparing the US to other countries allows us to consider new directions that the US might take when developing earner-carer policies for the future.

Required Readings

1. The American Bar Association. (2006). *Guide to marriage, divorce, and families*. New York: Random House Reference.
2. Bogenschneider, K. (2006). *Family policy matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do* (2nd Ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
3. Gornick, J.C., & Meyers, M. K. (2003). *Families that work: Policies for reconciling parenthood and employment*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
4. Additional readings can be found on reserve at the library or will be provided to you.

Suggested Readings

Barr, D.A. (2002). *Introduction to U.S. health policy: The organizing, financing, and delivery of health care in America*. San Francisco, CA: Benjamin Cummings.

Dnes, A. & Rowthorn, R. (2002). *The law and economics of marriage and divorce*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Elving, R. (1995). *Conflict and compromise: How Congress makes the law*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Zimmerman, S. (2001). *Family Policy: Constructed solutions to family problems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Websites of Interest

The White House: www.whitehouse.gov
The US House of Representatives: www.house.gov
The US Senate: www.senate.gov
Library of Congress: www.loc.gov (also Thomas legislative search engine: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>)
CNN Inside Politics: www.allpolitics.com
C-Span: www.c-span.org
The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars: www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact/index.htm
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP): www.clasp.org
The Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism: www.researchforum.org
The Urban Institute: <http://www.urban.org/>

Prerequisites

HDCF 263, SOC 101, POL 206 or permission by the instructor

Course Goals and Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with a better understanding of families, policy making, and the legal and political processes that impact family life. Class will be conducted using both lecture and seminar-style formats, where students will exchange ideas and information in a collaborative and informed manner. The course format is designed to facilitate student interaction, critical thinking, and debate.

Specific course objectives are to:

1. Examine family laws and policies that explicitly and/or implicitly impact families in our society
2. Examine family laws and policies in terms of their sensitivity to and supportiveness of diverse families
3. Provide an understanding of the ways in which families and government interact
4. Apply a family perspective to policy-making
5. Comprehend the definitions, approaches, and issues involved in family impact analysis
6. Compare U.S. family laws and policies to other countries to better understand U.S. family values and the state of American families

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation/Reading Summaries: 20%

The material in this course is most effectively mastered through careful reading, critical thinking, and lively debate and discussion. No issue is cut-and-dried and the success of this course depends on our ability to have thoughtful, respectful conversations about the course readings and lectures. **Ideally, you will attend each class and read each and every article in depth before each class meeting.**

- **READING SUMMARIES:** Every **Tuesday noted on the course schedule with an asterisk***, please submit a one-page summary which integrates the readings assigned for the week with previous course lectures. These summaries are NOT regurgitations of the readings—they should be reflective, critical, thoughtful. You might question some of the ideas raised in the readings or bring in materials from other classes to refute points. Rather than offer opinions, you might consider searching the web for alternative perspectives offered up by thinktanks or professional organizations. The summaries should be typed, single-spaced, checked for grammar and cohesion of thought, and should not exceed **one page**. Summaries are solo efforts and should not be worked on in groups. They are to be your own original work. If you use ideas from other sources, you should cite those sources throughout (e.g., “According to ___”). Plagiarism will be dealt with according to university conduct codes. **Late summaries will not be accepted.**

2. Midterm Exam: 20%

There will be one mid-semester essay exam in this course to examine your comprehension of family policy terms, historical underpinnings, conceptual frameworks, and family policy matters. A discussion of the exam and review of key issues will be held prior to the examination.

3. In-Class Exercises: 5%

During the semester, there will be a number of in-class exercises to apply what we learn or to dialogue about a specific policy matter. These exercises will be written-up in class and turned in to the instructor at the end of class. Details about each exercise will be discussed in class. Because of the nature of the assignment, those who miss class will not be able to make up the work.

4. Letter to Policymaker: 5%

Select a cause, program, or pending legislation that is of interest to you. Write a 1-page letter to the appropriate public official at the local, state, or federal level to express your views and to ask for his/her support. Mail the letter and turn in a copy to the instructor. As an alternative, talk personally to this public official about your views. Attach his/her business card to your description of your communication (i.e.,

main points discussed, official's response). An example letter will be offered in class prior to this assignment. If you want to complete this assignment before the due date—especially if the issue is pending in Congress and you want to act in a timely manner—please see me to discuss.

5. **Policy Brief/Research Paper: 30%**

- Select a family policy (or family-based program). Review the literature relevant to your topic to identify the historical, social, and political issues which might impact your policy topic (e.g., political movements, social trends, philosophies). Provide a description of the policy and activities associated with it and consider the impact of the policy on families (e.g., consider the intended and unintended consequences of your chosen policy for family functioning and well-being). Use the evaluation tools and family impact questions provided in class as a framework for conducting this analysis.
- Your paper should be typed, double-spaced (using 12-point font) and up to a maximum of **10 pages** in length. **You are required to use a minimum of 8 professional sources (refereed journal articles, book chapters).** It is critical that you cite all sources (including government, think tank, and other related websites); understand what plagiarism means and how to avoid it. All citations should be referenced using APA format (5th edition)—if you are not familiar with this format, see me early on for pointers. This paper should be your own work, not a collaborative effort. Acts of plagiarism—whether intentional or unintentional—will be dealt with according to university policy.

Below is an example format that your paper might follow; however, recognize that each topic will most likely require additional or alternative subject headers, etc.

- Review of Literature
 - Historical and contextual underpinnings related to policy
 - Changing trends in family life/political climate
 - Family values—Perspectives from the Right and Left
- Policy: Brief overview/description of policy
- Impact of Policy on Families
 - Theoretical framework guiding analysis
 - Research findings related to policy evaluation/Family impact assessment
- Recommendations for Future Family Policy and Conclusions

6. **Final Exam: 20%**

There will be an **optional** final exam that wraps-up the course and asks you to think back over the semester and reflect on what you have learned. You will be asked to select a family law or policy that is of interest to you, answer a number of questions about that policy/law, and discuss its implications for families. We will discuss this exam in greater detail in class.

Summary of Evaluation Criteria

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the student's performance in the following areas. There will be no extra-credit available.

1. Class Participation/Reading Summaries	20%
2. Midterm Exam	20%
3. In-Class Exercises	5%
3. Letter to Policymaker	5%
4. Research Paper	30%
5. Final Exam (optional)	20%
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Total	100%

Final Grades: Final grades will be assigned as follows:

94 and Above	A	74-77	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
88-89	B+	68-69	D+
84-87	B	60-67	D
80-83	B-		
78-79	C+	Below 60	F

Course Policies

- Make sure all written assignments are typed, double-spaced (except summaries, which can be single-spaced), and proofread for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and coherence. Adhere to APA 5th Edition format whenever feasible. Significant points will be deducted for poorly written work. Contact the Writing Center on campus or see me if you need help.
- Make sure you plan for the semester assignment due dates accordingly. This course depends on your timely participation, therefore, **there will be no late assignments accepted**. In other words, if you know you will be traveling during the semester or missing a class, you are responsible for alerting the instructor ahead of time and making sufficient arrangements.
- If you miss a class, you are responsible to contact a classmate and find out what you missed. I will not share my lecture notes with you.
- As I want to make this class as inclusive and accessible as possible, students are encouraged to discuss special needs/challenges with the instructor. Together, we can determine how best to meet your needs and course demands.
- Familiarize yourself with the **University's Code of Conduct**. I will follow the code to the best of my ability and expect you to do the same. If you are uncertain about aspects of the code (definitions, application of code to behaviors), it is your responsibility to seek clarification from the instructor or from university officials (Dean of Students Office, 120 Strand Union Building, 406-994-2826).

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

DATE	TOPIC	READING/ASSIGNMENT
	FAMILY POLICY: LAYING THE FOUNDATION	
WEEK 1 Jan 18	INTRODUCTIONS & EXPECTATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Family Policy? 	Bogenschneider pp. preface; 3-64
WEEK 2 Jan 23* & 25	DEFINITIONS & HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS THE RATIONALE FOR FAMILY POLICY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Overview of Family Policies in the US • An Ecological Perspective on Family Policy 	Kamerman & Kahn, “Child and family policies in the United States”[handout] Eileen Trzcinski, “An ecological perspective on family policy” [Available: http://www.montana.edu/ehhd/hhd/facultyandstaff/publications/ecological%20perspective%20family%20policy2.pdf]
WEEK 3 Jan 30* & Feb 1	THE POLITICS OF FAMILY VALUES: DOES THE US WALK ITS TALK? 2/1: FAMILY VALUES IN-CLASS EXERCISE	Bogenschneider pp. 97-159 DUE 2/1: FAMILY VALUES IN-CLASS EXERCISE
WEEK 4 Feb 6* & 8	FAMILY POLICY EVALUATION—THE STEPS FAMILY IMPACT ANALYSIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Impact Analysis as a Policy Tool 2/8: FIA IN-CLASS EXERCISE	Bogenschneider pp. 161-173, Appendix A-B [Optional]Theodora Ooms, “Taking families seriously: Family impact analysis” http://www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact/reports/pins2.pdf DUE 2/8: FIA IN-CLASS EXERCISE
	SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF FAMILY LAW & PUBLIC POLICY	
	PARTNERSHIP ENTRANCES & EXITS	
WEEK 5 Feb 13* & 15	Marriage Policies & Marriage Promotion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Marriage Initiative; Defense of Marriage Act; Covenant Marriage • Should Policymakers Promote Marriage Among the Economically Disadvantaged? Alternatives to Marriage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohabitation, Domestic Partnerships, and Civil Unions • http://www.unmarried.org/ 2/15 VIDEO: “Tying the Knot”	ABA pp. 1-64 Edin & Reed, “Why Don’t They Just Get Married?” http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/07_FOC_15-2_fall05_Edin-Reed.pdf Meezan & Rauch, “Gay Marriage, Same-Sex Parenting...” http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/06_FOC_15-2_fall05_Meezan-Rauch.pdf
WEEK 6 Feb 20* & 22	Divorce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Fault Divorce Laws • Property Division, Alimony, Child Support, Custody 	ABA pp. 79-195 June Carbone, “A feminist perspective on divorce” http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol4no1ART11.pdf
WEEK 7 Feb 27	Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Guest Lecture—VOICE on VAWA Midterm Review	ABA pp. 196-203

MAR 1	MIDTERM EXAM	
	POLICIES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES: FAMILY HEALTH & WELL-BEING	
WEEK 8 Mar 6* & 8	Welfare Reform (TANF) 3/8 VIDEO: "A Day's Work, A Day's Pay"	Mark Greenberg, et al. "The 1996 Welfare Law" http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/1-greenberg.pdf
WEEK 9 NO CLASSES	Spring Break!!!	
WEEK 10 Mar 20* & 22	Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Adoption Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)	ABA pp.65-78 Carol Tebben, "A family lawyer's guide to the Indian Child Welfare Act" (available: InfoTrac database, MSU) [Optional: Allen & Bissell, "Safety & Stability for Foster Children: The policy context"] http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/4-allen.pdf
WEEK 11 Mar 27* & 29	Food Insecurity and Nutrition Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Lunch Programs, Food Stamps, Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Health Care and Child Well-Being Medicaid/CHIPS 	"Obesity, food insecurity and the federal child nutrition programs: Understanding the linkages" http://www.frac.org/pdf/obesity05_paper.pdf TBD: Health care policy [Optional: Cindy Mann et al., "Historical overview of children's health care coverage"] http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/tfoc13-1c.pdf
	WORK & FAMILY ISSUES	
WEEK 12 Apr 3* & 5	Work and Family: The Conflicts Between Earning and Caring	Gornick pp. 1-83
WEEK 13 Apr 10* & 12	Ensuring Time to Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Leave Policy Work Regulatory Policies 	Gornick pp. 84-184
WEEK 14 Apr 17* & 19	Providing Public Care: Child Care, Preschool, and Public Schooling	Gornick pp. 185-303
	PARTICIPATING IN THE POLICY PROCESS: Influencing the Future of Family Policy	
WEEK 15 Apr 24 & 26	THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS AND ADVOCATES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to Engage in the Policy Process To Educate or To Advocate? 	Bogenschneider pp.177-244 [Optional: Bogenschneider pp. 245-297] DUE BY 4/27 AT 5PM: RESEARCH POLICY BRIEF
WEEK 16 May 1 & 3	COURSE WRAP-UP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief in-class presentations Discussion of Final Exam 	DUE 5/1: LETTER TO POLICY MAKER
MAY 7	FINAL EXAM (2-3:50PM) OPTIONAL	

*DUE: Summary of readings assigned for the week