

FAMILY POLICY

HDFS-450/650

Prerequisites: (HDFS-115, HDFS-215)

Spring, 2007

Instructor: Denise Skinner, Ph.D.
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OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
2:00-3:30 p.m.
(and by appointment)

TEXTS:

- Bogenschneider, K. (2006). *Family policy matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- The Politics of the Family (Special Issue). (2002). *The American Prospect*, 13 (7).
- Additional readings will also be assigned periodically throughout the semester as noted on course outline (and posted on D2L).

Course syllabus, materials, and grading is available on D2L.

References:

Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars Website: www.uwex.edu/ces/familyimpact

Legal Research: <http://www.uwstout.edu/lib/subjects/legal1.htm>

Legal Research–Wisconsin: <http://www.uwstout.edu/lib/subjects/legalwis.htm>

Citing Resources Page: <http://www.uwstout.edu/lib/reference/citation.htm>

Information on Policymakers, Issues, etc. <http://www.vote-smart.org>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The impact of government policies on families will be the focus of this course. The course will examine the current state of the family, family trends, and the implications for family policy. The varied effects that policies and programs can have on different types of families and different aspects of family functioning will be explored. The process of policy formation, implementation, evaluation and advocacy will be reviewed. Finally, emphasis will be placed on understanding a family perspective in policy-making and conducting family impact studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To provide an understanding of the ways in which families and government interact.
2. Apply a family perspective to policy-making.
3. Identify criteria needed to implement a family perspective into policy-making.
4. Comprehend the definitions, approaches and issues involved in family impact analysis.
5. Identify the content needed for family impact analysis including family and evaluation research

and public provisions and practices.

6. Compare and contrast the different methods used in family impact analysis.
7. Analyze the process of doing a family impact analysis.
8. Apply family impact analysis to public policy.
9. Examine policies in terms of their sensitivity to and supportiveness of families.

Additional Objectives for Graduate Students:

1. Evaluate effectiveness of various family impact analysis models.
2. Analyze the impact of a community program or agency on families.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION:

The material in this course is most effectively mastered through careful reading, critical thinking, and lively debate/discussion. No issue is cut-and-dried and the success of this course depends on our ability to have thoughtful conversations about the course readings and current event assignments. Class will be conducted seminar-style and your **informed participation is the most important requirement for this class.** You will earn credit (points) for active participation throughout the semester. (You will not earn points for mere passive presence.)

Participation points will be awarded at midterm and end of semester.

2. STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION OF READINGS:

To ensure insightful class discussion of the readings, 2-3 times during the semester you will be responsible for leading/facilitating discussion of the readings. To prepare for this responsibility you will be expected to orally review/summarize "your" articles for the class and generate 3-4 incisive and provocative discussion questions/talking points that arise from the assigned reading(s) and post on class webboard. The goal of this assignment is two-fold: a) to give you a chance to really think through the readings before you come to class; and b) to give the entire class a starting point for discussion. **Because these assignments are meant to help facilitate discussion, there will be absolutely no extensions.** *Further instructions will follow.*

3. NEWS REVIEWS:

Read at least three articles about current policy issues and government activities (local, state or federal level and executive legislative, or judicial branches) from a daily newspaper, online news source or weekly news magazine (Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report). A TV news program (Meet the Press, Face the Nation), interview or documentary may also be reviewed/ listed. Be prepared to report on these articles/programs in class and

discuss the issues involved. Do not read anecdotal or human interest articles to fulfill this assignment. Summarize one article to turn in, using this format: title of article, source and date, brief summary of the article, policy implications, (incorporate class concepts) and your own reaction. Attach a copy of the article. Also list the title and source of the other two articles you read. Summaries are to be turned in at class on assigned dates and will provide the basis for class discussion (you cannot turn in this assignment before/following class if you are absent that day).

4. LETTER TO POLICYMAKER:

Select a cause, program or pending legislation that is of interest to you (use your current news review reading for ideas). Write a letter to the appropriate public official at the local, state or national level to express your views and to ask for her/his support. Mail the letter. As an alternative, talk personally to this public official about your views or send your letter to the editor of local papers (5 pts. extra credit if published).

Turn in a copy of your letter or an accurate description of your conversation.

Due Date: April 12.

5. POLICY PRESENTATION AND SUMMARY ABSTRACT:

Each student is responsible for selecting an explicit family policy (a state or federal statute/law, a major court ruling, a community program) to present to the class. Some examples of possible topics are covenant marriage statutes, family preservation programs, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on grandparents' rights, adoption statutes, etc. After you've selected your topic you will review the relevant literature to identify the political, social, historical trends that have lead to the enactment of and/or have affected your policy. You will then teach/educate the class about this policy and conduct a family impact analysis of the policy providing a summary abstract and reference list for each class member. Presentation topics chosen will be grouped by topic areas and will determine the policy content portion for the latter class sessions. *(A separate handout explaining this assignment in more detail with a list of suggested topics will be provided and discussed further in class.)*

Graduate students must write a 10-page paper on the policy selected, conducting an extensive impact analysis which includes a method section identifying the population, data gathering and analysis, etc. See instructor for further explanation.

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and proofread for correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and coherence.

EVALUATION

Short Papers/Assignments

60-80 points

Starting point/perspective shifting essay (10 pts.)

News Reviews (three -10 pts. each)

Student-led discussions (two -10 pts. each)

Political Values Paper (10 pts.)

Letter to Policymaker (10 pts.)

Others (e.g., public hearings, etc.)

(No late assignments accepted. However, you will be able to drop lowest score of these 10 pt. assignments)

Policy Presentation and Abstract

40 points

Participation (informed involvement)

30 points

(You do not receive points for passive presence.)

Notes:

* Students with disabilities or special needs, which might affect their ability to perform in this class,

are encouraged to inform the instructor at the start of the course.

* If a departmental course is canceled for a conference, workshop or field trip for which student

attendance is recommended, those students unable to attend will be given an appropriate alternate assignment.

COURSE OUTLINE

TENTATIVE DATE

(dates subject to change)

READING

B = Bogenschneider

AP = American Prospect

TOPIC

FAMILY POLICY: WHAT IS IT?

Jan. 23	Introduction to the Course	
Jan. 25	Family Policy Issues	Kerchoff (handout) B – pp. xix-xx; xxxi-xxxiv
Jan. 30	Family Policy Definitions, Domains and Concepts	B – Chapters 1 & 3
Feb. 1	Role of Family Professional: Education, Advocacy, Implementation, Research <i><u>News Review Due</u></i>	B – Chapters 12 & 13

THE CONTEXT OF POLICY ISSUES

Feb. 6	History of Family Policy in the U.S. <i><u>Student-led Discussion</u></i>	“Reproductive Work, Productive Work, and Family Policy in the U.S.” (Davies – D2L) “Dependent Children and their Families” (Davidson – D2L)
Feb. 8	Child & Family Policy: Framing the Issues	B – Chapters 2,4,5 “Family Social Policy”

Student-led Discussion

(Eshleman – D2L)

Feb. 13 Policy Presentation Instructions
Novel Situation in Policymaking
News Review Due

Feb. 15 Family Demographics/Social Trends:
Policy Implications
Family Demographics Assignment Due

B – Chapter 8

Feb. 20 American Political Values, Cultures,
Perspectives
Video “Family Values”

B – Chapter 9

Feb. 22 American Political Values (continued)
Political Values Assignment Due

Feb. 27 Conducting Legal/Policy Research
Denise Madland at LLC

CURRENT POLICY ISSUES

March 1 Politics of the Family
Student-led Discussion Questions Due

AP
Introduction: The Politics of the
Family
Marriage Plus
Nostalgia as Ideology
Lack of Marriage Problem?

March 6 Politics of the Family (cont’d)
Student-led Discussion Questions Due

AP
Reconcilable Differences
Taking Care
Childcare Quality Matters
Other Marriage War

March 8 Politics of the Family (cont’d)
Student-led Discussion Questions Due

AP
Immigration’s Aftermath
Myth of Model Minority
What About Black Fathers?
Family-Friendly Europe

March 20 Video: Frontline “Let’s get Married:
U.S. Marriage Movement”

March 22 Video: S. Hewlett Address: “Our Children,
Our Families” to the MN State Legislature
Summary: Policies to Sustain & Support Families
Perspective Shifting – in class writing assignment

March 29 Individual Meetings Re: Paper/Presentations

A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE IN POLICYMAKING

April 3	A Family Perspective <u>News Review Due</u>	B – Chapter 11
April 5	Family Impact Analysis	B – Chapter 16 and Appendix A & B
April 10	Family Impact Analysis (continued)	
April 12	Family Impact Analysis (continued) <u>Letter to Policymaker Due</u>	

THE SUBSTANCE OF FAMILY POLICY

April 17-May 8	Student Presentations of Select Family Policies
May 11, Friday	(Final Exam Period – 10:00-11:50 a.m.) (Reserve Presentation Date)

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