

SOC208H1S: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL POLICY

University of Toronto

Term: Winter 2018 - Lecture Date/Time: Monday, 2-4 p.m. - Location: RW110

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Course Description

What is social policy? Why and how do countries make policies to promote the well-being of citizens, and why do these policies take different forms? How does the broader social context shape policy success and failure?

In this course, we answer these questions (and others) by examining social policy through a sociological lens. In the first part of the course, we examine the social factors that shape the process through which social policies are made. We consider effects of economics and distribution; parties, politics, and social movements; institutions and state structure; and culture and ideology, as well as globalization. In the second part of the course, we focus on examples of social policies around the world, and use these examples to explore how the broader social context shapes policy success and failure.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will:

- become familiar with key concepts in the field of social policy, including the welfare state, distributional issues, interest groups, social movements, institutions, and culture and ideology
- gain practice using sociology's theoretical toolkit (power, networks, institutions, and culture) to analyze the development, implementation, and effects of social policy
- develop the skills of effectively reading, synthesizing, and analyzing academic journal articles, in preparation for higher-level SOC courses
- explore how the broader social context shapes policy success and failure, drawing implications for policymakers

Prerequisites

The prerequisite to take SOC208H1S is SOC100H1 or SOC101Y or SOC102H or SOC103H. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.

Class Format, Requirements, and Grading

1. In-Class Test 1, February 12: 29%
2. In-Class Test 2, April 2: 25%
3. Term Paper, due March 19: 27%

4. Participation (including article summaries): 8.5%
5. Reading responses (3 x 3.5% each): 10.5%

Attendance and Participation

Course tests and assignments will cover required readings and material presented in class. While PowerPoint slides are posted to the course web page, lecture notes are not. Students are responsible for all material presented in class.

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned, and to come to class prepared to discuss and write about the readings. Class participation, contribution to class discussions, and in-class group work participation are expected.

The class on March 12 will feature a guest speaker. Lecture attendance is mandatory on this date. Students will also be asked to submit one question for the guest speaker to the course website by **NOON** on March 11.

Article Summaries

For each week in which readings are assigned, students will be asked to submit an approximately **250 word summary** of the academic journal article assigned each week (marked with a * on the syllabus).

NOTE: You do **NOT** need to submit a separate article summary for weeks that you choose to submit a reading response instead (see below).

The article summary is due to the course website by **NOON** on the **SUNDAY before that week's lecture**. So, the article summary covering the reading from Week 2 (Olsen, Gregg M. 1994. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States.") is due to the course website at noon on Sunday, January 14. No late summaries will be accepted.

Each article summary should describe the main ideas and primary insights from the article. It should:

- Identify the article's topic and research question. What is the topic of this article? What are the major question(s) that the author asks (and answers)?
- Briefly describe the most important arguments and findings. How does the author answer the research question? What are the most important points that should we take away from the article?

Keep in mind that your target audience is someone who has never read the article - they should be able to understand the main points of the article after reading your summary. Avoid jargon as much as possible, and be sure to define all key terms. This assignment is designed to develop important skills, including the ability to sort through details to identify key questions and the most important findings or arguments. To encourage students to focus on the main points, reading summaries **should never exceed 300 words**.

Reading Responses

For **three** of the weeks in which readings are assigned, students should expand their article summary into a reading response that analyzes ALL of the assigned readings for that week. Reading responses must go beyond summarizing the content of the readings to offer your own perspective or critical reaction.

The reading response should be no more than **600** words, double-spaced, and in 12 point font. You do not need to submit a separate article summary for the weeks that you choose to submit a reading response. All reading responses, like article summaries, must be submitted to the course website by Sunday at noon (e.g. a reading response that covers Week 3's readings must be posted to the course website by noon on Sunday, January 21).

******At least one reading response must be submitted before the lecture on Week 5 (February 5th).****** No late reading responses will be accepted.

Each reading response should include a brief summary of the central ideas or concepts from the readings. Responses should also consider how the readings relate to each other: do they raise similar points, do they disagree with each other, or do they shed light on different aspects of an issue or question? Responses should also go beyond summary to include analysis, and they should engage in some integration, tying insights from the readings to broader course themes and/or outside material. In drafting your response, you might consider the following questions:

Summary (should be brief):

- What is the topic and/or research question (if applicable) of each reading?
- What are the most important arguments or findings from each reading?
- How do the readings connect to one another? Do they raise similar points, do they disagree with each other, or do they shed light on different aspects of an issue or question?

Analysis:

- What was especially thought provoking or surprising to you about the readings, and why? How did the readings further your understanding of social policy?
- What do you think of the author's major arguments or findings? What are the reasons you agree or disagree with the author's viewpoint?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, or limitations of the readings?

Integration:

- How do the readings relate to other articles you read for the course?
- How do they relate to events in your own life or to current events in the news?
- What issues would you particularly like to discuss in class?

Please submit your reading response to the assignment links on the course website (entitled "Reading Response 1," "Reading Response 2," "Reading Response 3").

Each reading response is worth 3.5% of your total grade (10.5% total).

Grading Rubric for Reading Response

	Exemplary <i>4 points</i>	Acceptable <i>3 points</i>	Needs improvement <i>2 points</i>	Unacceptable in this form <i>1 point</i>
Coverage and Accuracy	Covers each reading assigned for the week thoughtfully and concisely. Accurately summarizes key points	Covers each reading thoughtfully and concisely. Summarizes key points, but imperfectly – contains minor errors or omissions, misses important nuance, etc.	Covers each reading briefly. Summaries include inaccuracies, omissions, or are incomplete	Does not cover all readings. Does not summarize key points or offers summary with major errors.
Discussion and Analysis	Analysis is substantiated through engagement with course material, including specific and fitting evidence to illustrate points raised. Considers strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument, and demonstrates thoughtful and insightful academic discussion	Discusses the texts' strengths and limitations thoughtfully, provides examples. Discussion remains more superficial than insightful.	Discussion or analysis of texts attempted, no examples included. Discussion does not demonstrate thoughtful insight or deep consideration of the material.	Lack of discussion or analysis.
Connection and Integration	Connects readings to other materials and/or broader course themes effectively by engaging with the substance of those themes/materials. Demonstrates thoughtful engagement with the material.	Connects readings to other materials and/or broader course themes, but connections are largely superficial	Connections to other materials and/or broader course themes are attempted but not clear	Lack of connection to other materials and/or broader course themes
Organization	Very clearly organized	Clearly organized	Organization less explicit	No organizational logic
Writing Style	Follows conventional academic writing formats. No errors in spelling or grammar, writing is clear.	Mostly follows conventional academic writing formats. Few spelling, grammar, or clarity issues.	Writing sometimes follows conventional academic formats. Spelling and grammar are recurrent issues. Writing is often unclear.	Writing does not meet conventional academic standards. Many spelling and grammatical errors. Writing is not clear.

Adapted from a similar assignment designed by Prof. Irene Boeckmann

Tests

There will be two in-class tests (February 12 and April 2) which will cover material from lecture and readings up to the date administered. A make-up test will be held only for students missing a test for valid reasons with documentation (see next section).

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero unless **within three days** of the missed test he/she contacts the instructor requesting special consideration and explaining why the test was missed. The instructor or TA will communicate the time and location of the make-up test. In order to take the make-up test, students must bring proper documentation from a physician or college registrar to the make-up test. This course follows university policy regarding documentation of valid reasons for late essays or missed tests:

In case of **illness**, you must supply a completed “Verification of Student Illness or Injury” form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted when you take the make-up test.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted when you take the make-up test.

Term Paper

Students will write a term paper for this course. The assignment prompt will be distributed after class on February 26. The paper is due before the start of class (2 p.m.) on March 19 and will count for 27 percent of your final grade. Students should submit two copies of the paper to the course website: one copy to the assignment link and one copy to the turnitin.com link. The paper should be approximately 4 to 6 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12-point font with one-inch margins.

Students are asked to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.” For information about the terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service, go to <http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/conditions-use.htm>

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %) unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Late Paper Penalty

Unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, or from your college registrar, late papers will incur an initial 5 point penalty (e.g. the highest possible grade a student can receive on a paper submitted after 2 p.m. on the due date will be 95 points). Five additional points will be deducted for each

additional day that the paper is late (e.g.. the highest possible grade drops to 90 after two days, 85 after three days, etc.)

Regrading Policy

If feel your grade on a test or assignment is unjustified, you must present your argument in writing and schedule a meeting with your TA within **one week** after the assignment is returned. This argument should respond substantively to feedback provided on the assignment: where and why you think that feedback is misjudged. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting, you may then contact the professor.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with serious penalties. Plagiarism means presenting work done by another person or source as your own, or using the work of others without acknowledgment. Any assignment or essay that is plagiarized will be assigned a grade of zero. If you are in doubt as to whether you are plagiarizing, please consult the following tips on using sources from the University of Toronto webpage on writing:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Email

My goal is to answer emails from students on weekdays within 48 hours, with the exception of those received on Fridays (these will be answered on Mondays or the next business day if the Monday is a holiday). Please include “SOC208” in the subject line of the email.

Readings

All course readings will be available on the course website. Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you come to class prepared to discuss the materials.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: _disability.services@utoronto.ca or [_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_) .

WEEK 1: January 8

What is Social Policy?

No readings

WEEK 2: January 15

The Welfare State

* Olsen, Gregg M. 1994. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*: 1-20.

Dean, Hartley. 2006. Pp. 29 - 32 in *Social Policy*. Polity Press: Cambridge, U.K.

I. FACTORS SHAPING POLICYMAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

WEEK 3: January 22 Economics and Distribution

Dean, Hartley. 2006. "Chapter 5: Who Gets What?" Pp. 58-68 in *Social Policy*. Polity Press: Cambridge, U.K.

* Korpi, Walter and Joakim Palme. 1998. "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries" *American Sociological Review* 63(5): 661-687.

WEEK 4: January 29 Power and Politics

* Huang, Xian. 2013. "The Politics of Social Welfare Reform in Urban China: Social Welfare Preferences and Reform Policies" *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 18: 61-85.

Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. 2016. "The Ruthlessly Effective Branding of Europe's Far Right" *The Guardian*. November 1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/01/the-ruthlessly-effective-rebranding-of-europes-new-far-right>

WEEK 5: February 5 Institutions and State Structure

* Dobbin, Frank. 2009. "Regulating Discrimination: The Paradox of a Weak State" Pp. 1 - 21 in *Inventing Equal Opportunity*. Princeton University Press.

Belshaw, John Douglas. "Chapter 2.11: The Provincial Rights Movement" in *Canadian History: Post-Confederation*. <<https://opentextbc.ca/postconfederation/chapter/2-12-the-provincial-rights-movement/>>

WEEK 6: February 12 In-Class Test 1

WEEK 7: February 19 Family Day (University Holiday, No Class)

WEEK 8: February 26 Culture, Morality, Ideology

Mosher, Janet and Joe Hermer. 2010. "Welfare Fraud: The Construction of Social Assistance as Crime" Pp. 17-53 in *Constructing Crime: Contemporary Processes of Criminalization*. UBC Press: British Columbia.

* Steensland, Brian. 2006. "Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy" *American Journal of Sociology* 111(5): 1273-1326.

WEEK 9: March 5
Globalization

* Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State" *American Journal of Sociology* 103(1): 144-181.

Drezner, Daniel W. 2009. "Bottom Feeders" *Foreign Policy*. November 19. 1-6.

II. SOCIAL CONTEXT SHAPES EFFECTS OF POLICY

WEEK 10: March 12

Guest Speaker: Attendance at Lecture is Mandatory

Questions due to course website before NOON on March 11

WEEK 11: March 19

Consider the Cultural Context and The Dosage Matters: AIDS Intervention and Work-Family Policies in Comparative Context

Boekmann, Irene, Joya Misra, and Michelle J. Budig. 2015. "Cultural and Institutional Factors Shaping Mothers' Employment and Working Hours in Postindustrial Countries" *Social Forces* 93(4): 1301-1333

* Swidler, Ann. "Responding to AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: Culture, Institutions, and Health" pp. 128 - 150 in *Successful Societies: How Institutions and Culture Affect Health*. Eds. Peter Hall and Michele Lamont. Cambridge University Press.

*** Term Paper Due ***

WEEK 12: March 26

Accountability and its Limits: Diversity Policies and Risk Policy in the U.S. (readings may change)

Dobbin, Frank and Alexandra Kalev. 2016. "Why Diversity Programs Fail" *Harvard Business Review*. July-August.

* Pernell, Kim, Jiwook Jung, and Frank Dobbin. 2016. "The Rise of Risky Derivatives: Chief Risk Officers, CEOs, and Fund Managers"

WEEK 13: April 2
In-Class Test 2