I. Catalog Description

II. Course Overview

This PhD seminar aims to expose students to diverse perspectives on social policy and social policy scholarship from a variety of disciplines and fields of study. The course will focus on how various theoretical and methodological approaches shape the types of questions, analyses, and evidence that are commonly associated with a particular discipline or field of study. This will be accomplished by integrating a range of expert guest speakers, class discussions, and readings in disciplines such as demography, developmental psychology, economics, law, sociology, political science, public health, and public management, as well as a cross-national perspective. In addition, the course aims that students are informed and up-to-date on the primary domains of U.S. social policy as well as current trends, debates, and research developments in each. This will be accomplished through a series of student-led presentations and discussions.

III. Course Objectives

After completing this course, students should demonstrate:

(1) Advanced knowledge of the major theoretical and empirical approaches to social policy from a range of disciplines and fields of study.
(2) A solid understanding of major U.S. social policy domains, including specific policies and programs, trends, issues and debates, and research developments.
(3) The skills to employ multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of social policy.
(4) The ability to summarize policy-related content and facilitate discussion thereon.

IV. Course Content

Week 1: 9/4
Topics: Introductions and Course Overview: Review of U.S. Social Policy Structure and Domains; Policy grid: child welfare

Required Readings:

Week 2: 9/11
Topics: Demographic/Sociological Perspectives—Marcy Carlson

Required Readings:

Week 3: 9/18
Topics: Developmental Perspectives—Katherine Magnuson

Required Readings:


Week 4: 9/25
Topics: Political Science Perspectives—Joe Soss

Required Readings:

Week 5: 10/2
Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy: TANF, Child Support

Required Readings:
- Green Book Chapters 7 (TANF) and 8 (Child Support Enforcement): Discussion leaders to read, everyone else to skim

Week 6: 10/9
Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy: Family Leave; Child Care Subsidies; Head Start/Early Head Start

Required Readings:

- Green Book Chapters 9 (Child Care); Advisory Committee on Head Start Research and Evaluation Final Report, August 2012 (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/eval_final.pdf), see also program facts (http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/mr/factsheets/docs/hs-program-fact-sheet-2012.pdf); ACF website section on “about Early Head Start” (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/about.html): Discussion leaders to read, everyone else to skim


Week 7: 10/16
Topics: Economic Perspectives—Maria Cancian

Final paper prospectus due
Required Readings:


Week 8: 10/23

Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; Medicare

Required Readings:

- Green Book Chapters 1 (Social Security) and 2 (Medicare); Medicare at a Glance(http://kff.org/medicare/fact-sheet/medicare-at-a-glance-fact-sheet/): Discussion leaders to read, everyone else to skim


Week 9: 10/30
Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy: Medicaid, S-CHIP, Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Required Readings:
- Medicaid (http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/Medicaid-and-CHIP-Program-Information.html), S-CHIP (http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Childrens-Health-Insurance-Program-CHIP/Childrens-Health-Insurance-Program-CHIP.html), Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Kaiser Family Foundation (2013). Summary of the Affordable Care Act.): Discussion leaders to read, everyone else to skim
Week 10: 11/6  
Topics: Public Management/Organizational Perspectives—Don Moynihan  

Required Readings:  
- TBA  

Week 11: 11/13  
Topics: Cross-National Perspectives—Tim Smeeding  

Required Readings:  
- TBA  

Week 12: 11/20  
Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy: Unemployment Insurance, EITC, SSI,  

Required Readings:  
- Green Book Chapters 3 (SSI) and 4 (UI): Discussion leaders to read, everyone else to skim  


**Week 13: 11/27**
Topics: Discussion of U.S. Social Policy: Food and Nutrition Programs; Housing Policy

**Required Readings:**


**Week 14: 12/4**
Topics: Student Policy Paper Presentations
Required Readings:
- Draft papers

Week 15: 12/11
Topics: Student Policy Paper Presentations

Required Readings:
- Draft papers

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

There are no required textbooks. All required readings will be posted on the class web site at Learn@UW or available from the web approximately 2 weeks prior to their discussion in class.

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Grading Scale & Standards:

Students' final grade will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>What the point totals &amp; subsequent grade generally indicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding, excellent work in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Outstanding, excellent work in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Meets expectations in most areas; below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas; not acceptable graduate work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Course failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation and presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short assignments</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment Instructions & Grading Rubrics:

Class participation and presentations. Because much of the learning occurs during the class time, students are required to attend every class or to receive approval in advance for not
attending. In addition, students are expected to have carefully and critically read all assigned readings, and to be prepared to be active participants in the seminar and discuss all assigned readings each week. Students should notify the instructor in advance of class if they are unable to attend due to illness or emergency. Multiple absences will be counted against participation/presentation points, which constitute 25% of the final grade.

Short assignments. Each student will complete four short written assignments of roughly three pages each. Two of the three assignments will be short essays, which briefly summarize (roughly 1 page) and critique (roughly 2 pages) the key theoretical or methodological concepts presented in the readings for the week. These essays should be posted on the Learn@UW site by noon on the Monday of the week in which the perspective will be discussed. In addition, students are required to prepare opening questions for the guest speaker in weeks they write essays.

The other two short assignments will consist of a summary of a specific policy domain. This should be presented in outline, rather than paper form, and should serve as an overview of the particular policy, program, or policy area. It should explicitly address the following:

- What are the eligibility criteria for participation in the program? Is the program means/income tested? Is it categorical? Is it an entitlement program?
- How large is the program and what proportion of eligible individuals are served?
- How is the program administered and through which agency/agencies? What form does the benefit take (e.g., cash, near, cash, in-kind)? How generous is the benefit?
- How is the program funded and how much does it cost?
- What are the important recent trends in the program vis-à-vis population served, take-up rate, cost, etc.?
- What are the primary focus areas of debate vis-à-vis the policy, program, or policy area?
- What are the key recent policy or research developments in this area?

Note that the best place to start for most of these policies is the Green Book:


These summaries should be posted on the Learn@UW site by noon on the Monday of the week in which they will be discussed. In addition, the student will be responsible for (a) making a brief presentation (10-15 minutes) on the policy, program, or policy area, and (b) leading the class discussion on the policy, program, or policy area. Finally, multiple students will be assigned to each session, it is the students’ responsibility to coordinate who will cover which topics in terms of both the summaries and presentations.

Each of the four short assignments will be worth 12.5% of the final grade.
Policy paper. Students will select a policy topic of their own choosing on which to prepare a mid-length policy paper (10-12 pages maximum). The paper should first provide background on the topic by documenting the major trends, issues, debates, and developments in the area (3-5 pages). It should then describe how theoretical or empirical approaches from at least three disciplines or field of study might be applied to that topic and discuss the implications of such application vis-à-vis shaping the types of questions, analyses, and evidence employed, as well as implications for policy. These policy papers will be presented to the class during the final two weeks of the semester (December 4 and December 11, 2013). The final papers should be posted to Learn@UW by noon on Wednesday, December 18, 2013. A prospectus of the paper (roughly one page or less) is due in Week 7 (10/16).

VII. Course Policies:

Students are expected to:
- attend each class session, actively participate in the in-class discussions.
- carefully and critically read all required readings before coming to class
- complete all assignments by the due dates and times (thus you are expected to plan your life so that you can make the required deadlines in the course)
- inform the instructor during the first week of the semester of any special accommodations needed for meeting class expectations (as approved by the McBurney Center)
- be respectful of other class members--a diversity of views and opinions may be articulatated during discussions.

The instructors are expected to:
- assure that course objectives are being met
- be available to students by appointment and to answer questions through email during business hours
- give reasonable guidance on preparing assignments
- be open to discussing concerns about the course
- evaluate and return assignments in a timely manner.