

University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Department of Public Administration
PADM 7380 PUBLIC POLICY SEMINAR
SPRING 2017

Instructor: Nichola Driver, MPA, PhD

Class time: Thursdays, 6pm – 8:40pm

Classroom: Ross Hall, Room 313

Office Hours: By appointment before class

Office: Ross Hall, 637

Email: nddriver@ualr.edu (best way to reach me)

Course Description:

This course will review state and federal social welfare policies and the impact they have on special populations (those in poverty, children, the elderly, the mentally ill, women, racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, LGBT). In addition, students will learn the theoretical bases of social welfare policies and analyze them from sociological, economic, political, and human service perspectives. We will also discuss the lived experiences of the poor and near-poor. The class will be seminar-style with an emphasis on student-led discussions, in-class activities, and peer collaboration.

Required Texts:

Hays, Sharon. (2003). *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Newman, Katherine S. and Victor Tan Chen. (2007). *The Missing Class: Portraits of the Near Poor in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.

In addition to the required texts, you will have additional weekly readings (mainly articles/case studies). These will be uploaded to Blackboard.

Assignments & Requirements

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard by 5pm on the due date (except discussion questions). Late assignments will only be accepted under extreme circumstances and will be given partial credit.

Class Attendance & Participation

Please come prepared to contribute to class discussion by synthesizing the readings, integrating discussion about your course project or other work, and providing thoughtful feedback on the work of other students. You should be prepared to answer discussion questions about the assigned readings. Be ready to learn from others by holding yourself and others to high standards

for analysis while honoring differences in experiences and values. Every effort should be made to attend all sessions. Attendance will be considered in your grade.

Discussion Management (6 times as lead)

Over the course of the semester, each student will lead the discussion on the assigned readings four (4) times. Each discussion that you lead is worth 50 points. Discussion leaders are expected to present the main points of the readings for that day, suggest strengths and limitations of the ideas included, and connect ideas to other course material. Students should provide a handout for the class and formulate at least five (5) discussion questions that will stimulate critical thought on the topic. **You will turn in your handout and discussion questions on Blackboard before class.**

Weekly Discussion Questions

Even when you are not the discussion leader, you are expected to bring two (2) discussion questions to class. You should also prepare brief comments, critiques, and other thoughts on the article so that you are prepared to participate in the discussion. You will not turn these in, but I will keep note of those who consistently do not have questions to contribute.

Final Paper (7-10 pages)

For your final paper, select one piece of legislation (i.e., TANF, ACA, etc.) OR a social program (i.e., WIC program, Pell Grant Program, food stamps, child protective services, etc.). This can be at the state or federal level. Describe this policy/program, discuss policy changes that have been proposed to address shortcomings related to this policy/program, analyze the rational and political ramifications of each alternative, and support a proposed policy change with evidence from the professional literature. There should be an emphasis on information from peer-reviewed journal articles, materials from credible policy research institutes, think tanks, and newspapers. Prepare a 7-10 page, double-spaced paper (not including references page) in size 12 font.

Grading:

Participation/Attendance	50 points
Weekly Discussion Questions	50 points
Discussion Management (60x3)	200 points
Final Paper	100 points
Total	400 points

Range of Points	Range of Percentages	Grade
358 – 400	90% - 100%	A
318 – 357	80% - 89%	B
278 – 317	70% - 79%	C
238 – 277	60% - 69%	D
0 – 237	0% - 59%	F

Classroom Etiquette:

Cell phones must be turned on SILENT! Do not use computers for anything other than the class work.

Arriving late in class and leaving early are very disruptive to the instructor and other students. Please let an instructor know prior to the beginning of class if you absolutely must leave early and make sure your exit distracts others as little as possible. Please make every effort to respect others. Disagreements are allowed and expected, but the focus should be on ideas rather than on the individual who expresses them. Signs of disrespect that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to, having background conversations when others are talking, packing up early when others are still talking or asking questions, and working on material for other classes.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

“Students may not disturb normal classroom procedures by distracting or disruptive behavior. A faculty member may, at his or her discretion, eject a disruptive student from the classroom for the balance of the class period. The faculty member should document the bases for the ejection. Students are strongly urged, following an ejection, to meet with the faculty member to resolve the issue.” – UALR Office of the Dean of Students

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating on exams, plagiarism, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Detailed explanations of the UALR’s standards of academic integrity for students may be found in the at <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/academic-integrity-1/>. If it is determined that a student has cheated on an assignment or has committed plagiarism, he or she will fail that assignment and will be reported to UALR’s Office of the Dean of Students.

Students with Disabilities

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability.

NOTE: I reserve the right to alter the syllabus to better suit the needs of the class.

Course Outline & Assignments

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Thursday, January 12	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review		
Thursday, January 19	The Formation of Social Welfare Policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hays, Chapter 1 2. Newman & Chen: Forward, Chapter 1, and Note on Methods 3. Danziger (2007) Fighting poverty revisited: What did researchers know 40 years ago? What do we know today? 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, January 26	The Formation of Social Welfare Policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newman & Chen: Chapter 3 2. Misra, Joya. (2002). Class, race, and gender and theorizing welfare states. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, February 2	Defining and Measuring Poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jacobsen & Mather. (2010). U.S. economic and social trends since 2000. 2. Benson. (2009). Changing standard of 'poor' 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, February 9	Preventing Poverty: Social insurance programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bongaarts. (2004). Population aging and rising cost of public pensions 2. Kaufman. (2012). This week in poverty: A little help for the long-term unemployed. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, February 16	The war on poverty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newman & Chen: Chapter 4 2. Scott & Leonhardt (2005) "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide" 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, February 23	Aging & the Disabled	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hays: Chapter 6 & Chapter 7 2. Pokempner & Roberts (2001). Poverty, welfare reform, and the meaning of disability. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, March 2	From AFDC to TANF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hays: Chapter 2 & Chapter 8 2. Danziger. (2010). The decline of cash welfare and implications for social policy and poverty. 3. Ehrenreich. (2009). A homespun safety net 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, March 9	Addressing nutrition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kumanyika & Grier. (2006). Targeting interventions for ethnic minority and low income populations. 2. Walsh. (2009). Getting real about the high cost of cheap food. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions

Thursday, March 16	Healthcare policies & program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newman & Chen: Chapter 5 2. Jacobs & Skocpol (2010) What did they deliver? The promise of affordable care. 3. Case & Paxson. (2006). Children's health and social mobility. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, March 23	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
Thursday, March 30	Children & families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hays: Chapter 3 2. Edin & Kefalas (2005). Conclusion in <i>Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage</i>. 3. Furstenburg et al (2004) Growing up is harder to do. <p>Optional: Furstenburg – After the recession</p>	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, April 6	Inequality in social welfare policy: Gender	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hays: Chapter 5 2. Stone. (2007). The rhetoric and reality of 'opting out' 3. Scott, London, & Myers (2002). Dangerous dependencies: The intersection of welfare reform and domestic violence. 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, April 13	<u><i>Meet Virtually</i></u> The future of social welfare policy	<u><i>Meet Virtually</i></u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reese, Ellen. 2005. Rebuilding the Welfare State: Forging a New Deal for Working Families. 2. Currie, Janet M. (2006). Defending and Mending the Safety Net. 	<u><i>Meet Virtually</i></u> Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, April 20	Inequality in social welfare policy: Race	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newman and Chen: Chapter 2 2. Herring, Cedric. (2002). Is Job Discrimination Dead? 	Lead Discussion OR Bring 2 questions
Thursday, April 27	Student Final Presentations		Final Paper Due