I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, quality and freedom for their spirit. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, other-centered men can build up.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Social Welfare Policy will provide students with an understanding of state and federal social welfare policies and the impact they have on special populations, particularly those in poverty. In addition, students will learn the theoretical bases for social welfare policies and analyze them from sociological, economic, political, and human service perspectives. We will examine the theory, structure, and policies of state and federal welfare agencies as well as the lived experiences of the poor and near-poor. This class will be framed around a number of key questions, and as we approach each of these questions, students will:

1. Examine the theoretical roots and foundations of social welfare policies (e.g., How are social welfare policies formed?)
2. Analyze types of social welfare policies that address poverty (e.g., How do social welfare policies address poverty?)
3. Understand types of social welfare policies directed toward nutrition, healthcare, and families (e.g., How do social welfare policies address other social needs?)
4. Investigate how social policies impact children, the elderly, the mentally ill, women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and gay/lesbian individuals (e.g., How do social welfare policies impact particular populations?)

Pre-requisites: ENG 1113 and 1213

REQUIRED TEXTS

3. Readings posted on our course page on Learn@UCO (learn.uco.edu) (D2L)
4. I may occasionally distribute readings in class and/or assign readings that you will need to access via the UCO library website. You will be responsible for this material as well.
COURSE FORMAT: The course will be held as a seminar with discussion led by all. I appreciate student collaboration in the construction of knowledge and I delight in your diligence as a reader and participant in the course. Because most of our class time will consist of student-led presentations and discussions, I expect you to take full responsibility for reading, analyzing, and preparing to discuss material each week. I will also provide lecture/discussion material at times, and we will occasionally engage in group activities and watch films or film clips.

The Board of Regents suggests you spend 6-9 hours each week preparing for this class, and I definitely agree. This class will be very challenging. Not only do you have to be able to recall information, but you will need to be able to understand it well enough to analyze, discuss, and apply it to new situations.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES: The University of Central Oklahoma is a learning-centered organization committed to transformative education through active engagement in the teaching-learning interchange, scholarly and creative pursuits, leadership, global competency, healthy lifestyles, and service to others. This course addresses 5 of the university’s transformative learning goals. Students will build discipline knowledge through their interactions with the readings, videos, classroom exercises, instructor, and one another; engage in scholarly and creative pursuits through in-class exercises, written papers, and exams; have the opportunity to build leadership skills through engaging in a collaborative, student-led pedagogy; further global competency through learning about comparative world policies; and learn to further healthy lifestyles and communities by discussing topics relevant to healthy relationships and populations.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy: I expect every student to attend each class period, within reason. I cannot see any student doing well in this course without attending consistently. If you miss a class, make sure that you get notes from another student; please make an appointment to meet with me before class if you have additional questions. I do understand that some absences may be necessary (If you are very ill, for example, please don’t come to class). Frequent absences will be noted and will impact your participation grade. Consequently, your attendance/participation could affect whether or not your final grade is rounded up if you are on a cut-point.

Classroom Civility:
1. Classroom Discussion: During this course, I anticipate that we will discuss some topics that many of us feel strongly about (which is a good thing!). While open discussion is an important part of the classroom experience, it is required that you treat your fellow classmates with respect. You must make your points in a way that is sensitive to others’ experiences and perspectives, as well as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, etc. Disagreement is expected but you should make your arguments based on empirical evidence and avoid making personal attacks against any one person or group of people. Disrespectful or threatening behavior towards others in the class will not be tolerated.

2. Please be on time to class and refrain from packing up or leaving early. Both behaviors are distracting to me and to the rest of the class. If you must arrive late, please come in as quietly
as possible and sit near the door. In addition, if you must leave early please inform me in advance and sit next to the door in order to minimize the distraction.

3. Make sure that you turn off all cell phones when you enter the classroom. Any student who is texting in class will be asked to leave.

4. Other matters of respect: Please don’t do things during class that you wouldn’t want others to do in your classroom. This includes reading the newspaper, doing homework for other classes, having side conversations, etc.

**Email Policy:** I do not accept assignment submissions via email. If you must be absent from class on the day that an assignment is due, you should email me your assignment in order to avoid late penalties (assuming your absence is excused). However, your grade on the assignment will be a “zero” until I receive a hard copy of the assignment. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that I receive the email. I will do my best to respond to your emails within 48 hours. You should copy yourself on all emails so you have proof of having sent them.

**Grade Changes:** The only circumstance under which I will change a grade is if I have made a calculation error. Please let me know if this is the case.

**Late exams:** Because exams are take-home and because you should have plenty of time to complete the exam, I see no reason that exams should be late. Therefore, late exams will not be accepted.

**Final Exam/Severe Weather Policy:** Because we have a take-home final that will be handed out well in advance, in the event of our final exam meeting being canceled due to severe weather, students should email the final rather than bring a hard copy. If we take this avenue, be sure to check for a confirmation from me to make sure I received it. Please check your email frequently in case of a severe weather cancellation.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer individualized extra credit under any circumstances. Though it will be rare, occasionally I will offer the entire class the opportunity for extra credit.

**Emailing Grades:** Due to FERPA regulations, I do not email grades. However, I am happy to meet with you before class to go over your grades. Additionally, I expect students to make their best effort to keep up with their own grades.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**
Your grades in this class will be based on active participation and written assignments. In addition to weekly participation (which includes attendance, active participation, and reading and other assignments), students will present on assigned readings and lead discussions. There will be two exams and a paper.

**Active Participation**
Discussing course material is essential for me to verify that you are reading, comprehending, and engaging it. Regular active participation is worth 50 points, or 10% of your grade. Your grade is based on how you engage with the rest of your classmates, the assigned reading, and any
additional material. As upper level undergraduate students, class participation for seminars like this requires your continuous attendance as well as completion of all reading assignments. As stated above, attendance to most (if not all) sessions is expected.

**Reading Presentation/Discussion**  
*Presentation/First Expert Assignment*  
Over the course of the semester, students will be responsible for presenting one assigned/chosen reading as the primary expert on that reading. Your presentation/discussion is worth 70 points. Students are expected to briefly discuss the main points of the reading they present, suggest strengths and limitations of the ideas included, and connect ideas to other course material (particularly the material assigned the week of presentation). Additionally, students should provide a handout for the class and formulate at least two discussion questions. One discussion question must relate to other course readings. Students will sign up for readings during our first class meeting. While our schedule may change, we will try to stick to it, and you should know when you present your readings according to the schedule. It is your responsibility to know when you present and to be prepared to do so when the time comes.

*Application/Second Expert Assignment*  
In addition to presenting as the “first expert” on one reading, each student will also be responsible as the “second expert” for two additional readings. Each of these assignments is worth 40 points. As the “second expert”, you will choose a sociological concept or theory that relates to the reading and helps us to better understand the sociological importance of the reading. For this assignment, you must: define the concept or theory for application; relate the concept or theory directly to the reading; and formulate one or two discussion questions regarding the theory or concept, as it relates to the reading. Ideally, you will draw on other course readings for your application. Students should provide a handout for the class, though we may or may not have time to discuss your work in detail. If we do not have time for you to discuss, your assignment will be graded by the handout, so be sure your handout is adequately informative. Students will sign up for readings during our first class meeting. While our schedule may change, we will try to stick to it, and you should know when you present your readings according to the schedule. It is your responsibility to know when you present and to be prepared to do so when the time comes.

Combined, the three reading presentations/discussions are worth 150 points, or 25% of your grade.

**Exams**  
There will be a midterm exam and a final. Each exam is worth 100 points, or 20% of your grade. The exams will be take-home, and will be essay format, and will cover materials from readings, lecture, videos, presentations, classroom exercises, and discussions. Because exams are take-home, I expect high-quality work that is typed and proofread in addition to being well-organized, thoughtful, and cited. (Refer to UCO’s plagiarism policy and feel free to speak with me if you have questions about how to cite material.) Exams are due in hard-copy form at the beginning of class on the date specified. See the course schedule for anticipated due dates.

**Policy Paper OR Book Review**  
For this assignment, you have an option to write either a policy paper or a book review. This assignment is worth 100 points, or 20% of your grade. Your paper must be turned in via hard
copy. Detailed instructions will be given at a later time. This paper will be due at the end of the semester. See the course schedule for the due date.

**Policy Paper:** You will complete a paper about a current or past local, state, or international social welfare policy. This paper will include discussion of the context and consequences of the chosen policy, and you should relate your discussion to course material.

**Book Review:** I will provide a list of books on poverty, welfare, and policy. You will choose a book and write a critical review, which should go beyond summarizing the book by integrating your response and knowledge, including materials from this course.

**Grades in this course are based on:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading presentations and discussions</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Paper or Book Review</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
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TOTAL – 500 points

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>448-500</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>398-447</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>348-397</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298-347</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-297</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although I don’t anticipate major changes, this syllabus is subject to change and you are responsible for being aware of the changes and responding to them accordingly.*
COURSE CALENDAR
(All readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned.)

Week 1: January 14
Introductions; Review of Syllabus; Introducing a sociological perspective of poverty and social welfare policy

Week 2: January 21
**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No class**

HOW ARE SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES FORMED?

Weeks 3 and 4: January 28, February 4
Sociology of poverty and social welfare policy: Historical, political and theoretical views of poverty and social welfare policy; Brief U.S. History of social welfare policy

Week 3 Readings:
Hays: Chapter 1
Newman and Chen: Forward, Chapter 1, and a Note on Methods

Week 4 Readings:
Newman and Chen: Chapter 3

HOW DO SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES ADDRESS POVERTY?

Week 5: February 11
Defining and Measuring Poverty


Week 6: February 18
Preventing Poverty: Social Insurance Programs


Week 7: February 25
(*I anticipate giving you your take-home exam this week)

The War on Poverty; Helping the “Deserving Poor”: Aging and Disabled

Newman and Chen: Chapter 4

**Week 8: March 4**

*Helping the “Deserving Poor”: Aging and Disabled (continued)*

Hays: Chapter 6


**Week 9: March 11**

(*I anticipate your first exam will be due this week. Plan accordingly so you have time to complete your exam and the readings for the week.*)

*From AFDC to TANF*

Hays: Chapter 7


**Week 10: March 18**

**Spring Break – No Class**

**HOW DO SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES ADDRESS OTHER SOCIAL NEEDS?**

**Week 11: March 25**

*Healthcare and Nutrition Policies and Programs*


**HOW DO SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES IMPACT PARTICULAR POPULATIONS?**

**Week 12: April 1**

*Children and Families*

Hays: Chapter 3

Week 13: April 8
*Inequality and Social Policies: Gender*

Hays: Chapter 5

Week 14: April 15
*Policy Paper or Book Review Due*

*Inequality and Social Policies: Race*

Newman and Chen: Chapter 2

Week 15: April 22
(*I anticipate handing out your final exam this week.*)

*Inequality and Social Policies: Immigration and Gay Rights*

*Immigration*
Newman and Chen: Chapter 8

*Gay Rights – Choose one:*

Week 16: April 29
*Looking forward to the future of social welfare policy*


Week 17: May 6
*Final Exam Due*