

I. Foundations of Social Policy

Prof. Kenneth Apfel

Kenneth S. Apfel is a professor and director of the public management program at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. He held the Sid Richardson Chair in Public Affairs at the LBJ School of Public Affairs from 2001-6. Prior to his academic appointments, he served as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration from 1997 to 2001. Apfel previously worked in a number of senior federal capacities, including service in the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President, and at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where he served from as the Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget. From 1980 to 1993, Apfel worked on Capitol Hill for Senator Bill Bradley and with the US Senate Budget Committee. Apfel was a Presidential Management intern following his graduation from the LBJ School in 1978. He is an elected Fellow and Board Chair of both the National Academy of Public Administration and the National Academy of Social Insurance.

Description

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of: (1) the key demographic and economic trends underway in the US, with particular attention placed on the changing picture of the poor, the elderly and our increasingly diverse population; (2) the history and evolution of social policies in the United States as well as the structure of programs and responsibilities among levels of government and the private sector; (3) an assessment of key U.S. social programs and future challenges, and (4) a comparison of the social policies of the US and various other nations.

A substantial share of the course work is devoted to policy analysis and discussion of the programs that now support the key areas of social policy—income security, health care and human capital investment. We examine key contemporary policy issues and options in all of these areas, including welfare reform and support for the poor and disabled, education policy, Social Security and Medicare for the elderly and health insurance for the non-elderly.

Historical readings are from *The Divided Welfare State* (Hacker) and *From Poor Law to Welfare State* (Trattner). The other principal readings are chapter drafts from *Changing Poverty* edited by Danziger & Cancian. These drafts were the subject of a recent conference held in 2008 at the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin. In addition, I have assigned a number of book chapters, articles and government publications, as well as topical policy research papers and advocacy pieces. A very wide range of opinion and analysis is presented.

The course requires very extensive reading and class preparation as well as a high level of participation in class. Student assessment is based on class participation, weekly writings posted to the discussion board, short and lengthy written assignments, and presentations on a variety of social policy topics.

Readings

- *The Divided Welfare State*, by Hacker. Cambridge University Press, 2003 (noted in syllabus as **DWS**).
- *From Poor Law to the Welfare State*, by Trattner. NY: The Free Press (Simon and Schuster), sixth edition, 1999 (noted in syllabus as **PLWS**).

Other Readings:

The chapter drafts from *Changing Poverty*, edited by Danziger & Cancian, are noted in the syllabus as **CP**. An excellent supplementary reading source is *The Green Book*, a House Ways and Means Committee 2004 compilation of federal social programs. The Green Book is available on line at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wmprints/green/2004.html>

Course Requirements

1) Class participation and “weekly responses” to readings:

All students are expected to prepare for and to actively participate in class discussions. It is absolutely essential that students read the course materials in advance of class. Downward adjustments in grades will be made if students miss a significant number of classes or fail to actively participate in class.

Prior to each class (except the first class and the last two classes), I ask that you post a brief reaction—no longer than 100-200 words—to the Blackboard “*discussion board*”, to be available for reading by all members of the class. I urge you to read, build on and respond to the comments of the other class members. All reactions are due by midnight the day before class. Your response should include the following:

- **Insight/Idea:** What did you see as the most important insight/idea from the readings?
- **Reaction:** What are your reactions? Are you convinced of any conclusions? If there are apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the readings, what do you make of them?
- **Class discussion:** What one or two key issues, questions or concerns would you particularly like to discuss in class?

2) International Presentations:

During the first class session, I will ask all students to rank their interest in the international cases that we will examine over the course of the semester. Students will make presentations and lead discussions on the social policy systems and challenges facing a variety of other countries—as examples, the Canadian health care system, the Chilean and/or British public pension systems, the German long term care system, etc. A three page summary memo on the topic is to be prepared and distributed to the class a day prior to the presentation.

3) Cross-fire Sessions:

During the first class session, I will ask all students to rank their interest in the cross-fire sessions that we will hold over the semester. Teams of students will role-play members of Congress, Administration officials, agency policy analysts and leaders of interest groups at these sessions. I will serve as your spunky moderator.

4) Individual Policy Paper and Presentation:

In lieu of a final examination, each student will develop a 15+ page paper on a specific social policy issue. I must approve the topic of the paper before the middle of the semester. All students will make oral presentations to the class on their papers at the end of the semester.

Student Assessment

Student assessments will be based on class participation, written assignments and oral presentations. Before the middle of the semester, the *class* will decide on the relative weights of the various assignments for the purposes of grading. *My* proposal for assessment is as follows:

- Overall class participation and weekly responses 15%
- Individual policy papers and oral presentations 50%
- International memos/presentations 20%
- Cross-fires 15%

Class Schedule and Assignments

1) Overview & Introduction

General introductions. What do we mean by the term “social policy”? What we will (and won't) be able to cover in a one semester course. We'll also discuss how families are affected by our social policies and how these families live on their current incomes. Please read the items below before the first class:

Readings:

- DiNitto: “The Scope of Social Welfare Policy,” in *Social Welfare*, Fifth Edition. Pp. 2-12.
- US Conference on Catholic Bishops: take a tour of this “forgotten state” on line at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/povertyusa/tour.htm>

2) Assessing Poverty and Income Adequacy

An examination of US & international trends in poverty. An examination of a variety of concepts and measures that are used to describe poverty and income adequacy. A look at race/ethnicity and poverty. A discussion of why the poor are poor, and how one's “answer” to the question may shape policy direction.

Readings:

- Meyer and Wallace: **Poverty Levels and Trends in the US and the US in Comparative Perspective**
- Blank and Greenberg: *Improving the Measurement of Poverty*, Hamilton Project, 2008 (skim)
- Rector and Johnson: “Understanding Poverty in America.” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1713. (quick skim).

- Besharov: Congressional Testimony on Poverty Measures, 2007. Available on line at: http://www.aei.org/docLib/20070802_BesharovTestimony080107.pdf
- Wider Opportunities for Women: *The Self Sufficiency Standard*, available at: <http://www.wowonline.org/ourprograms/fess/documents/FESSFactSheet2008FINAL.pdf>
- Cancian: **Changes in Family Structure, Childbearing, and Employment: Implications for the Level and Trend in Poverty**
- Schiller: “Views of Inequality and Poverty”, from *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice-Hall, 2004.
- Raphael and Smolensky: **Immigration and Poverty in the United States** (optional)
- Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal: **Enduring Influences of Childhood Poverty** (optional)

3) September 15: America’s Delivery Mechanisms

An examination of America’s unique social policy arrangement. Discussion of a wide range of various delivery mechanisms. Crossfire #1 on the alternative ways one could deliver child care support to young children.

Readings:

- DWS: “American Exceptionalism Revisited”, pp5-31
- Moffit, Scholtz and Cowan: **Trends in Income Support (CP)**
- Starobin: “The Daddy State” *National Journal*, 3/28/98
- Kosterlitz: “The Ownership Society” *National Journal* 1/24/04
- Thaler: “Libertarian Paternalism is not an Oxymoron”, AEI, 2003
- Ellwood: “Values & the Helping Conundrums”, pp 14-44; from *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family*
- Moon: “The Moral Basis of the Democratic Welfare State” From *Democracy and the Welfare State* edited by Gutman (optional).
- Thompson: “The Roles of Social Insurance, Tax Expenditures, Mandates and Means Testing” pp 9-26 (optional)
- Mkandawne: “Targeting and Universalism in Poverty Reduction”, UN Research Institute for Social Development, 2005 (optional)
- Cox: “Block Grants” for National Academy on Aging (optional).

4) (a) What’s Happening to Work and Income in the US? (b) Early Historical Evolution of US Policies

(a) An examination of changes in work and income in the US, including international comparisons. (b) Social policy in colonial and early industrial eras up to the Great Depression.

Readings:

- Blank: **Economic Change and the Structure of Opportunity for Less-Skilled Workers**
- Ellwood et al: “Winners and Losers in America”, pp 1-41

- Rector: “Two Americas: One Rich and one Poor?” 2004. Available at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Taxes/bg1791.cfm>
- Aspen Institute: *Grow Fast Together or Grow Slowly Apart*, 2002 (just skim the executive summary).
- Heyman: Work-Family Issues and Low-Income Families
- **PLWS**: Skim Chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 10.
- Orloff: “The Political Origins of America’s Belated Welfare State”, Wier, *The Politics of Social Policy in the US*. (first half only: pp. 37-64).

5) PETER REUTER CLASS: Is Demography Destiny?

Discussion of the scope and implications of growing diversity in the US and the world, as well as a discussion of the scope and implications of aging trends in the US and the world.

Readings:

- Martin and Midgley “[Immigration to the United States: Shaping and Reshaping America](#)” *Population Bulletin* **58(2)** 2003 (pp.1-25)
- Jencks, C. “Who Should Get In?” two part essay in the *New York Review of Books* Vol. 48, Nos. 19 and 20 (2001). [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) (35 pages)
- Borjas, G. “[Economics of Migration](#)” *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* Section 3.4, article 39 (20 pages)
- Goodhart, D. “The Discomfort of Strangers” *The Guardian* Feb. 24, 2004 [10 pages]
- Himes, C. “[Elderly Americans](#)” *Population Bulletin* 2001 (40 pages)
- Munnell, Hatch and Lee *Why Is Life Expectancy so Low in the United States?* Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (10 pages)
- “Work and Retirement” Chapter 5 in Clark et al. *The Economics of An Aging Society* pp.111-134

6) Welfare Policies for the Poor

Overview of evolution of welfare policies for the poor. A close look at the political process behind the 1996 reforms: if you were President in 1996, would you have signed the welfare bill? And if you were a key Administration official who opposed the bill, would you have resigned when the President signed it?

Readings:

- Pavetti: “Welfare Policy in Transition”, from *Understanding Poverty*, Russell Sage Foundation, 2001
- **PLWS**, Chapter 14, pp. 337-49, pp.355-9 and Chapter 16 (skim).
- Schiller: “Welfare Programs”, from *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice-Hall, 2004.
- Barnett: “Better Off Welfare”, (optional)
- Reading packet on **Welfare Reform 1996**, plus the following two optional historical readings:
- Rector: “Why Congress Must Reform Welfare” Heritage Foundation 1996 (optional).

- Edelman: “The Worst Thing Bill Clinton has Done” *Atlantic*, 1997 (optional).

7) (a) Other Social Policies That Support Families; (b) Disability Policy

Discussion of approaches to support working families. International presentation on the Scandinavian model of family support. Crossfire on affirmative action. Discussion of US disability policy.

Readings:

- Ellwood: “Anti-Poverty Policy for Families in the Next Century: From Welfare to Work—and Worries”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Winter 2000, pp 187-198
- Waldfogel: **The Role of Family Policies in Anti-Poverty Policy (CP)**
- Bane: **Poverty Politics and Policy (CP)**
- Besharov: “Two Cheers for Welfare Reform”, 2006. Available on line at: http://www.aei.org/publications/filter.all,pubID.24809/pub_detail.asp
- Holzer: ”Affirmative Action: What do We Know?”, JPAM, 2005
- Nadel et al: “The Challenge of Growth: Disability Benefits in the US”, from *Sick Societies: Disability Benefits in Post-Industrial Welfare States*, ISSA, 2005.
- Burkhauser, R. and M. Daly “U.S. Disability Policy in a Changing Environment” *J. Economic Perspectives*, 2002 (skim).
- 2004 *Green Book*: Supplemental Security Income, pp.36-50 (optional). On line at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wmprints/green/2004.html>
- **Scandinavian Family Support Reading Packet**

8) Background and Evolution of Public and Private Pensions

Historical evolution of US pension policies. Overview and discussion of Social Security and future challenges. Crossfire on raising the retirement age.

Readings:

- **PLWS**: Chapter 13 “Depression and the New Deal”
- Orloff: “The Political Origins of America’s Belated Welfare State”, Wier, *The Politics of Social Policy in the US*. Pp. 65-80 (see week #5 readings).
- **DWS**: pp67-173.
- Howard: “Employer Pensions”, from *The Hidden Welfare State*, Princeton Press, 1997.
- Apfel and Littlefield: ”Assessing Social Security’s Past, Present and Future”, from *Big Choices: The Future of Social Security*, University of Texas, 2007
- “Summary of the Social Security and Medicare Trustees Report” (quick skim) <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/TRSUM/trsummary.html>
- Apfel/Flowers: “Three Options for Social Security Reform”, from *Big Choices: The Future of Social Security*, University of Texas, 2007
- Pozen: “Testimony on Progressive Price Indexing” House W/M Committee, 5/12/05.
- Jackson: “It’s Even Worse Than You Think” NY Times OPED, 2003
- Congressional Budget Office: “Social Security: A Primer” (optional).

- **Retirement Age** reading packet
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9) The Future of Public and Private Pension Policy

Should the US “privatize/personalize” Social Security? A global perspective on pension reforms. International presentation on the Chilean/UK system. Presentation on the challenges facing the US private pension system.

Readings:

- White House: “Strengthening Social Security”, Feb. 2005
- Cogan & Mitchell "Perspectives on The President’s Commission", from *Jnl. Economic Perspectives*, Spring 2003, pp.149-172
- Furman: “Evaluating Alternative Social Security Reform Proposals”, House W/M Committee, 5/12/05
- Brown/Apfel: “Point/Counterpoint: Would Private Accounts Improve Social Security?” from *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Summer, 2006.
- Munnell: “Retirement Blues”, Boston College Magazine, Spring 2004, pp 46-50.
- **Chile/UK Pensions** Reading Packets
- **US Private Pensions** Reading Packet

10) Public and Private Health Insurance for the Elderly

Historical evolution of US health policies. Discussion of Medicare debate and future challenges. Crossfire on Medicare Rx drugs.

Readings:

- **DWS**: pp.175-269.
- McLanahan/Apfel: “Medicare Overview”, From *Big Choices: Health Insurance for Older Americans*, University of Texas, 2006.
- Kaiser Foundation: “Medicare at a Glance”, “Medicare Advantage”, “Medicare and Rx Drugs”. Available on line at: <http://www.kff.org/medicare/factsheets.cfm>
- Clark: “The Financing & Delivery of Acute Health Services”, pp 271-315, *The Economics of an Aging Society*, 2004 (optional)
- Herd: “Understanding the Options”, From *Big Choices: Health Insurance for Older Americans*, University of Texas, 2006.
- Butler: “Social Values and Medicare Reform” *The Ethics of Medicare Reform*, Johns Hopkins University, 2002
- Feder & Moon: “Can Medicare Survive its Saviors”, *The American Prospect*
- Rice: “An Analysis of Reforming Medicare Through a ‘Premium Support’ Program”
- **Rx Drugs** reading packet

11) PETER REUTER CLASS: Investments in Education and Training

Discussion of the federal & state roles in preschool and elementary and secondary education as well as training programs.

Readings:

- Jacob & Ludwig: **Improving Educational Outcomes for Poor Children (CP)**
- Holzer: **Workforce Development as an Antipoverty Strategy: Up, Down and Back Up? (CP)**
- Schiller: "Education and Ability", from *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*, Prentice-Hall, 2004.
- Nathan, et al: "Should the Federal Government be involved in School Accountability? **Journal of Policy Analysis and Management**, 2005.
- Besharov: *Head Start's Broken Promise*, AEI, 2005

12) Long Term Care Policy

Discussion of the long-term care challenges facing the nation. Presentation on the long-term care system in Germany

Readings:

- Clark: "Additional Health Issues: Long Term Care", pp 316-343, *The Economics of an Aging Society*, 2004
- Feder: "Long Term Care Policy Options for the Future", Georgetown University, 2007. Available at <http://ltc.georgetown.edu/forum/ltcfinalpaper061107.pdf>
- Alper & Gibson: "Integrating Acute & Long Term Care for the Elderly", Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2001
- Finkelstein: "The Market For Private Long-Term Care Insurance" NBER, 2007
- Smith: "The Role of Long Term Care in Health Reform" Heritage Foundation, 2009 congressional testimony (skim)
- Estes and Weiner: "The Politics of Long-Term Care" The Urban Institute, 1999
- **German Long Term Care Reading Packet**

13) Health Policies for the Non-Aged

Discussion of government role in providing/encouraging health insurance for the working age population, particularly low income and uninsured non-elderly individuals. Crossfire on Bush vs. Obama Administration's health insurance proposals. International presentation on the Canadian health care system.

Readings:

- Anderson: "Health Spending in the US and the Rest of the Industrialized World", *Health Affairs*: July 2005
- Schwartz: **Health Care for the Poor: For Whom, What Care, and Whose Responsibility? (CP)**

- Serafini: “Lessons of Massachusetts”. *National Journal*, 2009
- Case: “Clinton Health Plan”
- Scheiber and Maeda: “Health Care Financing in Developing Countries” *Health Affairs*, 1999
- Holohan & Spillman; “Health Care Access for Uninsured Adults”, Urban Institute, (optional)
- Reinhardt: “International Perspectives on Health Policy Reform” pp 161-182, *Social Security and Medicare*.
- Esping-Anderson: “After the Golden Age?” Welfare State Dilemmas in a Global Economy”, pp 1-11 and 20-27, *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptations to Global Economies*, Sage Publications
- **Canadian Health Care** Reading Packet
- **Bush/Obama Health** Reading Packet

14) Start of Individual Presentations

15) Completion of Individual Presentations and Course Wrap-Up