Political Science 3319
The Politics of Social Policy
Section: 27022
Lecture: Tuesday 1-2:30
Classroom: Roy Cullen 102
Instructors: Harrell Rodgers, Professor, and Jennifer Clarke (Assistant Professor)
Office 406 PGH
Extension 3-3917
E-Mail HRodgers@UH.EDU
University Web Page www.uh.edu/~dsocs3

Office Hours: 11-12 Tuesday and Thursday and 3-4 Tuesday and Thursday

Required Texts:

Rodgers, American Poverty in a New Era of Reform, 2006

Helpful Reference Materials:


Green Book. Published every other year by the Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives. Overview of all major social welfare programs, including statistical data on welfare populations and demographic trends. This is an excellent source for detailed information. Either google “Green Book” or go to gpoaccess.gov/green/index.html.

Income in the United States. Summary of annual census on income of Americans. See census.gov web site and click on Income.

Families and Living Arrangements. Summary of yearly census on American households. Published about every two years. Series P20 of the Census data. Google “Families and Living Arrangements.”

Annual Statistical Supplement to the Social Security Bulletin. Published yearly. Data are reasonably current. Good data on major social welfare programs.
**Kids Count Data Book.** Published yearly by the Annie Casey Foundation. High quality data on child demographics by state.


**The State of American Children Yearbook.** Published yearly by the Children’s Defense Fund. Excellent data.

**Indicators of Welfare Dependence,** Annual Report to Congress. Published Yearly by Health and Human Services.


**TANF Annual Report to Congress.** Comprehensive analysis of state welfare reform plans. Google “TANF Annual Report to Congress.”

**Comparative Studies of Poverty.** Google “Luxembourg Income Study.”

**Child Poverty:** Google “National Center for Children in Poverty.”

**Some excellent web sites:**

- U.S. Census data. [http://www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin. [http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp](http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp)

These websites are loaded with demographic data, caseload information, descriptions and analyses of the new welfare reform bill, state welfare reform plans (you can visit each state’s welfare reform site), and hundreds of impact studies. Almost all the government data and the various studies can be downloaded using an adobe reader (easily downloaded from the census website). The welfare reform site has an excellent index of state reform plans, by topic such as job training programs, anti-pregnancy programs, evaluations of various welfare-to-work programs, etc. Several of the websites have links to all other websites that focus on welfare reform.

**Course Focus:** The course will concentrate on the public policy decisions-making process in the United States, public policy theory, policy evaluation and American and European income distribution, poverty and social welfare policies. Emphasis is placed on questions related to poverty, inequality, and social policy. Over the past several decades, rights and opportunities have expanded for many disadvantaged Americans, most notably for women, racial and ethnic minorities. Yet, inequalities of income and
wealth have risen to heights not seen since the Gilded Age. The terms and rewards of employment have changed dramatically for American workers and responsibilities for an assortment of economic risks have shifted from institutions to families and individuals. Policy supports for low-income families have been reorganized around new goals, and while some forms of support have been cut back, others have grown. The American welfare state has moved into a new era of devolution, privatization, and behavioral expectations. The transformation of the American welfare system, and the weakening of the safety net will be the major focus of the course.

**Class Meetings:** We will meet once a week and each week there will be on-line assignments. Each member of the class will be expected to carefully read the assigned materials for the class and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. Each week there will be a deadline for the completion of the on-line assignments.

All the assigned materials, except the required texts, are on the class WebCT-Visa site. To access this system, direct your browser to: [http://uh.edu/webct](http://uh.edu/webct) and click on the Red WebCT Vista button. Enter your user ID and password and then select this class from the list: POLS 3319. If you do not know your WebCT Vista user ID or password, please call 713-743-1411 or stop by the TSS Help Desk in Hoffman Hall Room 116.

**Readings exams:** On-line: Each week you will have readings assignments. There will be a five question test over the readings to be taken the week of the assignment.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS:** There will be six discussion boards. You will be given an article to read. You write an original posting and reply to at least one classmate’s posting. There is no limit on the number of posting you can make on a topic, but you will only be graded on one original and one reply. Rules of "netiquette" apply! Flaming, comments that are derogatory to ones nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation are not acceptable. You can disagree with someone’s opinion, but do so respectfully. These are exercises to engage you in free thinking. Do not let preconceived ideas limit you.

**Major Tests:** There will be three major exams over the course materials. These exams will be taken in the CLASS testing center. The tests dates and materials to be covered are listed below.

**Exam I**
Friday, February 20, 2009 – 9:00AM-10:20PM – 20 Students  
Friday, February 20, 2009 – 3:30PM-4:50PM – 20 Students

**Exam II**
Friday, April 3, 2009 – 9:00AM-10:20PM – 20 Students  
Friday, April 3, 2009 – 3:30PM-4:50PM – 20 Students

**Final Exam**
Tuesday, May 12, 2009 – 2:00PM-5:00PM – 40 Students
GRADING: You can look at your grades on-line at any time. The on-line grading system works quite well. It is fast and accurate. However, it is your obligation to regularly check your grades on-line to make certain that your scores are being recorded. After you submit work, wait 24 hours and then go on line to see if your scores show up in the on-line grade book. If you see a problem, let me know immediately. Once the semester is over, we will not accept the excuse that you did not know that one or more of your scores was not recorded.

Your final grade will be determined by the following method:

1. 3 major exams – maximum 100 points each
2. 14 On-Line Quizzes over readings—maximum 10 points each
3. 6 Discussion Boards – maximum 10 Points each
4. Total the number of points that you receive for each assignment and test. Divide that number by five. This is your course grade.

Total maximum points that you can earn is 500. As an example, if you made the following grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam I:</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam II:</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam III:</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative On-Line Quizzes</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Discussion Board</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points Earned (TPE)</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPE Divided by 5</td>
<td>85</td>
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</table>

You would have earned a B in this class.

THE FINAL GRADE SYSTEM IS AS FOLLOWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 or Above</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 93</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 - 87</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 - 84</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 - 80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 - 77</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 - 74</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 - 70</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>69 - 67</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>66 - 64</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 - 60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 or Below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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COURSE PROTOCOLS

1. **Read the Syllabus Carefully.** We do not mind you asking questions about subjects covered by the syllabus, but you need to carefully read the syllabus. If you do not, you are vulnerable to making mistakes that will cost you points in the class. You will receive weekly e-mails reminding you of the assignments you need to complete that week.

2. **Attendance.** Make a point of attending class and arriving for the class on time. Anyone entering the class late disrupts the class and disrupts my lecture. I reserve the right to lower the grade or drop any member of the class who creates a disruptive environment by making a habit of entering the class after the lecture has started.

3. **Missed Internet Exams.** If you do not take the readings assignment exams or post on the bulletin boards by the date and time listed, you will not be allowed to make up the work. Your grade for that exam will be zero. If you wait until the last minute to take the exam and then suffered technical problems with your computer, you will miss the test. Give yourself enough time to take the tests and post on the bulletin boards. Political Science has a computer lab that you can use to take exams or read assignments and conduct research. The lab is located in room 391 PGH.

4. **Posting Grades.** Grades will be posted on the WebCT site.

5. **Dropping the Course.** You may drop the course passing up until the official university drop date. The last date you can drop the course passing is January 28. If you do not drop the course by then you will get a grade; you cannot get a “W.”

6. **Communications, E-Mail and Internet:** Throughout the semester you can communicate with me by e-mail any time you wish. My e-mail address is Hrodgers@uh.edu. I normally check and answer mail seven days a week, even when I am traveling.
Lecture, Reading Assignments and Exams:

I. January 20th, 2009. An Introduction to the American Public Policy Process
   • Rodgers, Making Public Policy, PowerPoint
   • Readings: On-line assignment: Review Rodgers, Making Public Policy, PowerPoint

Answer five questions. Due - January 25 by 11:30PM

   • Attitudes Toward the Poor and Welfare programs
   • Readings: Hacker, Chapter 1
   • Review: On-line Jantti, “Mobility in the United States in Comparative Perspective”

Answer five questions. Due - February 1 by 11:30PM

III. February 3rd. American Poverty in a Comparative Context
   • Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 1
   • On-line article: Rodgers, “America’s Market-Oriented Approach to Poverty: A Comparative Perspective.”

Answer five questions. Due - February 8 by 11:30PM
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - February 8 by 11:30PM.

IV. February 10th. Measuring American Poverty
   A. How is Poverty Measured by the American Government?
   B. Alternative Measures of American Poverty
   C. Comparative Measures of Poverty
   D. Are the American Poor, Really poor?

   • Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 2
   • Readings: Hacker, Chapter 2
   • Review: On-line Meyer “Poverty Level and Trends in Comparative perspective.”

Answer Five questions. Due - February 15 by 11:30PM
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - February 15 by 11:30PM.
V. February 17th and 24th. The American Poverty Population
   A. The Impact of Race, Ethnicity, Sex, Age, Region and Family Structure
   B. Poverty Among American Children
   C. Why are Female-Headed Families So Vulnerable to Poverty?

   • Readings: Rodgers Chapter 3
   • Readings: Hacker Chapters 3 & 4.

Answer five questions. Due date February 22 by 11:30PM.

   • Readings: On-Line: Cancian and Reed, “Family Structure, Childbearing, and Parental Employment: Implications for the Level and Trend in Poverty”

Answer Five Questions. Due - February March 1 by 11:30PM.

VI. March 3rd and March 10th. The Causes of Poverty: Theories and Empirical Analysis
   A. The Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty
   B. Welfare Use
   C. Cultural/Behavioral Theories
   D. Structural/Economic Theories, Combined Theories.
   E. Microeconomics Theories of Poverty
   F. Summary: Implications for Welfare Reform

   • Readings: Rodgers Chapter 4

Answer five questions. Due date March 8 by 11:30PM.

   • Readings: Hacker Chapter 5.

Answer Five Questions: Due - March 15 by 11:30PM.
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - March 15 by 11:30PM.

VII. March 24th. The Evolution of American Welfare Policy
   • Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 5
   • On-Line: Bane, “Poverty Politics and Policy”

Answer Five Questions: Due - March 29 by 11:30PM.
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - March 29 by 11:30PM.
VIII. March 31st and April 7th. State Plans within the new Welfare System
A. Concerns and Events that Brought About Welfare Reform
B. An Analysis of the New Bill
C. Implementation at the State Level
D. Implications for Poverty in America.

- Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 6 and 7

Answer five questions: Due - April 5 by 11:30PM

- Readings: Hacker, Chapter 6.

Answer five questions: Due - April 12 by 11:30PM.

IX. April 14th and 21st. Impact of the 1996 Welfare Reform
A. Impact on welfare rolls.
B. Impact on poverty
C. The role of race in policy design
D. What has happened to those who have left welfare?
C. Implementation and Impact of selected major provisions

- Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 8

Answer five questions: Due - April 19 by 11:30PM.


Answer five questions: Due - April 26 by 11:30PM.
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - April 26 by 11:30PM.

X. April 28th. Designing More Effective Social Welfare Programs
A. Strengths and weaknesses of PRWORA
B. Reforms
C. Evolving from welfare to family policy

- Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 9
- Readings: Hacker, Conclusions

Answer five questions: Due - May 3 by 11:30PM.
Bulletin Board: Read on-line article and respond. Due - May 3 by 11:30PM.
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy appears in each edition of the Student Handbook (page 9 of the 2005-2006 edition) and online at http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html.

The FAQ's are intended to clarify Academic Honesty processes, not to substitute for the complete policy published in the Handbook. It is each student’s responsibility to be aware of the Academic Honesty Policy.

Click here to review the FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about the Academic Honesty Policy.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
In order to receive accommodation on exams and assignments, students must make arrangements with me during the first two weeks of the semester. In addition, I recommend that students with disabilities learn about their rights and responsibilities from the Center for Students with Disabilities. This center provides a wide variety of academic support services to all currently enrolled UH students who have any type of mental or physical disability of either temporary or permanent nature. These services include assistance with course accommodations, adaptive equipment, individualized exam administration, taped textbooks, wheelchair repair, library needs, registration, handicapped parking, accessible housing and transportation, as well as many other needs. If you feel that you may need assistance of this nature, you may wish to call the Center at 713-743-5400.