POL 622: Research Seminar on Comparative Social Policy
Fall, 2014
M 6:30-9:20, BRNG B206

Professor’s contact information:

**Professor Pat Boling**  Office: BRNG 2256  Phone: 494-3711  boling@purdue.edu
Office Hours:  Tues 8:30-10:00, Th 3:00-4:15, and F 1:30-2:30 (I teach MWF 9:30 and 12:30)
*Save email for simple queries, and come to my office hours to talk about ideas and course substance!

Course Description:

We tend to think of social policy in terms of the social safety nets enacted by welfare states. Here are some other possibilities: Ann Shola Orloff (1993) defines social welfare policies as "interventions by the state in civil society to alter social and market forces" (Orloff, 1993). Such interventions can be seen as benign, or even emancipatory. T. H. Marshall (1964) saw the development of social policies as the development of social rights of citizenship. States first developed legal rights of citizenship, then political ones, and finally social ones, gradually extending equality of citizenship to broader spheres. Adolino and Blake (2001) define social policies as policies aimed at improving citizens’ lives: “We use the term social policy because it captures the many ways in which government tries to protect and directly improve people’s standard of living” (p. 243). But social policies and welfare states can also constrain and normalize citizens, and they vary considerably with respect to how redistributive and egalitarian they are.

Social policy is not a tidy, clearly defined set of issues or programs. We’ll talk about what exactly we think “social policy” includes at our first class meeting; for the sake of this description, I take an encompassing view. Social policies are ones related to insuring that people have certain minimum benefits if they become ill, handicapped, too old to work, or lose a spouse. They also relate to education, supporting working parents, assistance to the poor, public health regulations of things we consume (food, alcohol, drugs, tobacco), provision of health care, access to recognized relationships (marriage, divorce), discrimination on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation, bigotry, hate crimes, and general guarantees of equal treatment under the law.

What are the political dynamics that drive or impede government recognition of and responses to social problems? How does government action on social problems work to define or transform a policy regime or a social and political order? (How) can we learn from the study of successes and failures in addressing social problems? In undertaking to answer these and other questions, social policy scholars confront core issues of democratic theory (How are social groups represented in government processes? How should they be?), policy theory (What political factors determine agenda setting, or improve government responsiveness and effectiveness?) and comparative politics (Why are some governments more responsive to a given problem than others? In comparison to other developed countries, is the American welfare state underdeveloped? How do social movements and administrative processes affect policy processes?)

This course will introduce students to comparative social policy, looking mostly at cross-national comparisons. It offers students an opportunity to work on research projects exploring an
area of social policy of interest to them. The main project you will undertake in this class is to write a research paper that could form the basis of a publishable paper or a dissertation prospectus.

- Note that the items in this syllabus are subject to change, as events get in the way of the best laid plans. I will announce/discuss changes in readings and the like in class, and may also occasionally send you an email if there’s a reading change. Please be sure you read any course-related messages I send you.

**Required texts:** The 2 books below have been ordered at University and Follett’s. In addition, a number of book chapters and articles are assigned for the course. All except a couple are available on Blackboard, and the others are clearly labeled below in the weekly reading assignments (they’re available in one case through a Purdue ebook, in the other through JSTOR).


**Course Requirements:**

1) **Class Participation.** This class will be taught as a seminar: you should come to each class having already done the reading for that session. This will allow you to discuss and ask questions about the readings for that day as part of our class session. Good discussions are a collective good: they rely on the hard work and commitment of everyone enrolled to work well. *Therefore, if don’t have the time this semester to do the readings in advance for the course, please don’t take this class.*

Students will sign up to lead discussions on the readings. Students will do this in groups of 2 or 3 per class. Discussion leaders are responsible for preparing a 1 page, 2-sided “report” on the week’s readings. First write a short summary of the key points in each reading. Second and much more important, devise 6 or so possible discussion questions or lines of questioning for the class session.

- Good questions will be more insightful than simply asking about content (we’ll assume that everyone knows what the articles or books have said); they should elicit discussion of key and contested ideas and arguments that come up in the readings. Where appropriate, they should help us make connections and develop dialogues among *different* readings.

The summary and discussion questions are due to me by 11:00 pm Sunday before our Monday evening class. Please make copies of these handouts to hand out in class. Students will begin class by reviewing their summaries, but this should only take about 5 minutes of class time. People will have a chance to ask questions about anything that seems unclear or confusing, and we’ll talk a bit about the difficulties in the readings. Then the student leaders will introduce their questions for discussion, and use them to guide discussion.

Both preparing your summary and questions and leading discussion in class should be a collective effort. I will not accept individual submissions from individual group members: you
should meet at least once before class to discuss the readings as a whole and work on the summaries and discussion questions, rather than simply dividing them up and doing your summaries and questions independently.

Your participation grade will be based on general participation in class discussions, the summaries and questions prepared in advance for one class discussion each, and possibly a combination of short reaction papers, required comments at start of class, or other forms of participation (25% of grade).

2) Literature Review. The lit review is a paper of 3000-5000 words that presents and analyzes work that has been done on the social policy topic that you are working on for your research paper. It is intended to get you to review a good bit of the pertinent research that’s been done on your topic (or related ones), so that you can speak to the scholarly conversation that’s going on which you mean to advance by writing your paper. You’ll read a solid chunk of articles, books and book chapters related to your topics, and then write a paper that discusses them, noting what is important about their contributions and what is not fully worked out or lacking about them. This is due by 11:00 pm on October 15 (the Wednesday after October break); please send it (and subsequent assignments) to me as an attached Word file (15% of final grade).

3) Comments on peer drafts. Students will be assigned a “peer” and will evaluate both their peer’s lit review and rough draft. These comments will be given to both the author and the instructor, and will be evaluated by the instructor for depth, clarity, and insight. (10% of grade).

4) Research Paper, in pieces. My goal is for each of you to conceive of a research project, do the research, and write a paper about it over the course of the semester. You will turn in topics for this paper on September 22 (5%), a lit review on October 15 (15%), a rough draft on November 3 (15%), and a final draft by 11:00 pm on December 15 (worth 30%). The final draft should show substantial development and refinement beyond the first draft; do your best to grapple with the comments from me and your peer evaluator on the rough draft.

- **Late papers.** Papers turned in late without a valid extension will be down-graded 1 partial letter grade for each day – e.g. an A- paper turned in 1 day late will become a B+. **Extensions must be requested prior to the paper due date and be supported by a valid reason.** No extensions will be granted the day the paper is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies.

- **Citation and Plagiarism.** The Basic Rule: *Don’t use the ideas of others without attribution* – that is plagiarism, and it will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly more serious consequences including failing the course and referral to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action. Plagiarism includes using the exact words (or virtually the same) of another source without quotation marks, copying or using the substance of another person’s argument in part or in whole without attribution, or more generally turning in work that is not substantially your own. If you have any doubts about when to cite someone’s work or not, **don’t guess** – ask me before you turn in the paper. If you are citing things found on the internet, you must include both the name/sponsor of the web site, the URL, and the date you accessed the site.

*Class Assignments and grading*
Class participation 25%
Paper topics, due in class Sept 22 5
Literature review, due by 11 pm Oct 15 15
Rough draft of paper, due in class on Nov 3 15
Final paper, due by 11 pm Dec 15 30
Comments on writing buddy’s lit review & rough draft 10

Grading:

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**Week by Week topics and readings** (there are 2 assigned books; everything else is posted on BB unless otherwise noted). Some subtracting and adding of readings is possible, so please be sure that you are attentive to announcements of this in class or by email.

25-Aug Introductions to one another, social policy, and the seminar

1-Sep Labor Day: no class


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2. Gerring, John. "What is a case study and what is it good for?" *American political science review* 98.02 (2004): 341-354.  (Paper topics due tonight) |
<p>| 13-Oct     |                               | October break: no class.  NB: Lit review is due October 15 at 5:00 pm |
| 27-Oct     | class cancelled: individual meetings | |</p>
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<td>1-Dec</td>
<td>student presentations</td>
<td>you must attend, listen and ask questions and offer suggestions to your classmates</td>
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<tr>
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Final drafts of your papers are due December 15 at 11:00 pm

Recommended readings will be posted to Blackboard a bit later this semester; you’re always welcome to come talk with me about topics that you’re interested in. I like providing research help.