

SOC208H1S: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL POLICY

University of Toronto

Term: Winter 2022 - Lecture Date/Time: Monday, 10 am to 12 pm - Location: SS2117

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Applications Used for Online Delivery: Zoom

Course Description

What is social policy? Why and how do countries make policies to promote the well-being of citizens, and why do these policies take different forms? How does the broader social context shape policy success and failure?

In this course, we answer these questions (and others) by examining social policy through a sociological lens. In the first part of the course, we examine the social factors that shape the process through which social policies are made. We consider effects of economics and distribution; parties, politics, and social movements; institutions and state structure; and culture and ideology, as well as networks and globalization. In the second part of the course, we focus on examples of social policies around the world and use these examples to explore how the broader social context shapes policy success and failure.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will:

- become familiar with key concepts in the field of social policy, including the welfare state, distributional issues, interest groups, social movements, institutions, and culture and ideology
- gain practice using sociology's theoretical toolkit (power, networks, institutions, and culture) to analyze the development, implementation, and effects of social policy
- develop the skills of effectively reading, synthesizing, and analyzing academic journal articles, in preparation for higher-level SOC courses
- explore how the broader social context shapes policy success and failure, drawing implications for policymakers

Prerequisites

The prerequisite to take SOC208H1S is SOC101Y or SOC102H or SOC100H. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.

Class Format, Requirements, and Grading

1. Analyzing Social Problems and Policy assignment, due February 2 at 11:59 p.m.: 10%
2. Test 1 (in-class), February 14: 28%

3. Test 2 (in-class), April 4: 25%
4. Term Paper, due March 21 at 10:00 a.m.: 29%
5. Participation (including article summaries, in-class participation assignments): 8%

Attendance and Participation

Course tests and assignments will cover required readings and material presented in class. While PowerPoint slides are posted to the course web page, lecture notes are not. Students are responsible for all material presented in class.

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned, and to come to class prepared to discuss and write about the readings. Class participation, contribution to class discussions, and in-class group work participation are expected.

When the course is online, it will be conducted as a “live synchronous” class (in other words, students are expected to “show up” for class by clicking on the Zoom link during our regularly scheduled class time and participating via Zoom).

Your participation grade is calculated primarily based on your submission of weekly article summaries and your participation in the in-class participation exercises. To account for life circumstances, each student can use one “free pass” for participation per semester: one opportunity to not submit an article summary OR participate in the in-class exercise without penalty. In other words, even if you miss one participation opportunity in this course, you can still achieve a perfect participation mark.

Please note: The class on March 14 will feature a guest speaker. **Lecture attendance is mandatory on this date.** That is, you must be present from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon) on March 14, 2020. Students will also be asked to submit one question for the guest speaker to the course website by 12 p.m. (**NOON**) on March 13.

Article Summaries

For each week in which readings are assigned, students will be asked to submit an approximately **250-word summary** of the academic journal article that is assigned for that week (marked with a * on the syllabus).

Each article summary is due to the course website by 12 p.m. (**NOON**) on the **SUNDAY before that week’s lecture**. So, an article summary covering Week 2’s reading (Olsen, Gregg M. 1994. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States.") is due to the course website by noon on Sunday, January 16.

Each article summary should describe the main ideas and primary insights from the article. It should:

- Identify the article’s topic and research question. What is the topic of this article? What are the major question(s) that the author asks (and answers)?

- Briefly describe the most important arguments and findings. How does the author answer the research question? What are the most important points that should we take away from the article?

Keep in mind that your target audience is someone who has never read the article - they should be able to understand the main points of the article after reading your summary. Avoid jargon as much as possible and be sure to define all key terms. This assignment is designed to develop important skills, including the ability to sort through details to identify key questions and the most important findings or arguments. To encourage students to focus on the main points, article summaries **should never exceed 300 words.**

No late article summaries will be accepted for any reason. Please be sure to submit the summaries by noon on Sunday. If you anticipate this being a problem (e.g. you receive academic accommodations that allow for the submission of late work), please reach out to Professor Pernell as soon as possible (and no later than the second week of class) to discuss alternative assignments. I am committed to maintaining an accessible classroom and will work with your accessibility advisor to accommodate your needs.

Analyzing Social Problems and Policy Assignment

This assignment asks you to apply knowledge that you have learned thus far in the course to a new case. A short reading describing a social problem that Canada is currently facing will be posted to the course website after class on January 24. Your assignment is due to the assignment link on Quercus on Wednesday, February 2, 11:59 p.m.

After you review the short reading, please respond to following in 750 words or less:

- First, summarize the social problem described in the article. Your summary should allow someone not taking this course to fully understand this problem.
- Second, choose three concepts or issues that have been discussed in this course so far (as of the end of class on January 24). First, fully define each concept or issue. Then, explain exactly how specific points covered in this short reading speak to or relate to this concept or issues. A list of concepts and issues covered thus far will be posted to the course website to refresh your memory.
- Third, critically evaluate the policy proposal at the end of the short reading.
 - (1) first, based on what we have learned so far in class, answer this question: what should Canadian policymakers be worried about if they choose to adopt the policy proposed at the end of the reading?
 - (2) second, provide an example of another policy that might be effective in resolving this problem. Explain your reasoning: why do you think this policy would be effective? Your **answers to both questions should draw from course material in some way**. Be sure to make the connection back to course material clear here.

Responses will be evaluated on the following, from most to least important:

- Were three concepts or issues from the course comprehensively, accurately, and precisely defined? Was the connection between these concepts/issues and the content of the short

reading fully, accurately, and precisely explained? Overall, does this discussion demonstrate in-depth understanding of course material?

- Did the student answer the two policy-related questions (see bullet point 3 above)? Were the answers to these questions reasonable? Did they link to broader course themes? Is the connection to course material clear, accurate, and comprehensive?
- Was the social problem itself summarized comprehensively, accurate, and precisely?
- Is the style of writing clear and easy to follow?

Tests

There will be two tests (February 14 and April 4) which will cover material from lecture and readings up to the date administered. These tests will occur in person, in our regular classroom.

A make-up test or missed submission/s, will be granted only for students with valid reasons (see below).

- If you are unable to turn in an assignment/or miss the test for medical reasons, you will need to **email me** the instructor, not the TA, **and also** declare your absence on ACORN.
- If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must ask your college registrar to contact me (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). I must receive an email from your registrar before you write the make-up test or submit the missed assignment.
- If you miss a test for **accessibility reasons** (e.g. you miss the test for disability-related reasons and you are registered with accessibility services), you must contact your accessibility advisor about the circumstances and ask them to contact me. I must receive an email from your accessibility advisor before you write the make-up test.

Term Paper

Students will write a term paper for this course. The assignment prompt will be distributed after class on February 28. The paper is due before the start of class (10 a.m. EST) on Monday, March 21 and will count for 29 percent of your final grade. The paper should be approximately 5-6 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12-point font with one-inch margins.

Students should submit one copy of the paper to the **assignment link on the course website**.

Please make sure to leave ample time to upload your papers. Papers submitted after 10:00 a.m. EST for any reason (including technical difficulties) will receive a 5-point deduction. Please see late paper penalty below.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Assignments not submitted to the plagiarism detection tool will receive a grade of zero unless a student instead provides, along with their assignment, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading

notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting to the plagiarism detection tool) is in place because, strictly speaking, using the plagiarism detection tool is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Late Paper Penalty

Late papers will incur an initial 5-point penalty (e.g. the highest possible grade a student can receive on a paper submitted after 10 a.m. on the due date will be 95 points). Five additional points will be deducted at 10 a.m. for each additional day that the paper is late (e.g. the highest possible grade drops to 90 after two days, 85 after three days, etc.)

Regrading Policy

If you feel your grade on a test or assignment is unjustified, you must present your argument in writing to your TA within **one week** after the assignment is returned. Please wait 24 hours after receiving assignment feedback to contact the TA (this allows time to digest the feedback). This argument should respond substantively to feedback provided on the assignment: where and why you think that feedback is misjudged. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting, you may then contact the professor.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with serious penalties. Plagiarism means presenting work done by another person or source as your own or using the work of others without acknowledgment. Any assignment or essay that is plagiarized will be assigned a grade of zero. If you are in doubt as to whether you are plagiarizing, please consult the following tips on using sources from the University of Toronto webpage on writing:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment. This is to ensure students registered for this class get the opportunity for one-on-one consultations. If you wish to schedule an appointment with me, please use the appointment slots made available weekly on Quercus: Click on the “Calendar” in the menu on the left-hand side, then go to “Find Appointments” on the right-hand side. You may use office hours as an opportunity to explore ideas and experiences related to the course material, discuss plans for a career in sociology, or discuss other course matters.

I will hold office hours in person or over Zoom (virtual until January 31st; student’s choice afterwards). I will assume that you plan to attend over Zoom unless you tell me otherwise (please let me know in advance if you plan to attend in person). Please attend your scheduled appointment by clicking the Zoom meeting link posted to the course Quercus site. I will admit you to the meeting room after your scheduled appointment time starts.

Email

My goal is to answer all emails from students on weekdays within 48 hours, with the exception of those received on Fridays (these will be answered on Mondays or the next business day if the Monday is a holiday). Please include “SOC208” in the subject line of the email. If you haven’t heard back from me within this time period, please feel free to follow up.

Readings

All course readings will be available on the course website. Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you come to class prepared to discuss the materials.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: _disability.services@utoronto.ca or [_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_). I am also committed to maintaining an accessible classroom. It is easier for me to achieve this goal when I know about the academic accommodations each student requires in advance. **If you plan to use your academic accommodations in this course, please send me your letter of accommodation as soon as possible** - ideally, before or during the first week of class.

WEEK 1: January 10 **What is Social Policy?**

No readings

WEEK 2: January 17 **The Welfare State**

* Olsen, Gregg M. 1994. "Locating the Canadian Welfare State: Family Policy and Health Care in Canada, Sweden, and the United States." *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*: 1-20.

Dean, Hartley. 2006. Pp. 29 - 32 in *Social Policy*. Polity Press: Cambridge, U.K.

I. FACTORS SHAPING POLICYMAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

WEEK 3: January 24 **Economics and Distribution**

* Korpi, Walter and Joakim Palme. 1998. "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries" *American Sociological Review* 63(5): 661-687.

Dean, Hartley. 2006. "Chapter 5: Who Gets What?" Pp. 58-68 in *Social Policy*. Polity Press: Cambridge, U.K.

WEEK 4: January 31 **Power and Politics**

* Kim, Yeon-Myung. 2008. "Beyond East Asian Welfare Productivism in South Korea" *Policy & Politics* 36.1: 109-125.

Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. 2016. "The Ruthlessly Effective Branding of Europe's Far Right" *The Guardian*. November 1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/01/the-ruthlessly-effective-rebranding-of-europes-new-far-right>

*** Analyzing Social Problems and Policy Assignment due Wednesday, February 2 at 11:59 p.m. ***

WEEK 5: February 7
Institutions and State Structure

* Dobbin, Frank. 2009. "Regulating Discrimination: The Paradox of a Weak State." Pp. 1 - 21 in *Inventing Equal Opportunity*. Princeton University Press.

Belshaw, John Douglas. "Chapter 2.11: The Provincial Rights Movement" in *Canadian History: Post-Confederation*. <<https://opentextbc.ca/postconfederation/chapter/2-12-the-provincial-rights-movement/>>

WEEK 6: February 14
Test 1

WEEK 7: February 21
Family Day (University Holiday, No Class)

WEEK 8: February 28
Culture, Morality, Ideology

* Steensland, Brian. 2006. "Cultural Categories and the American Welfare State: The Case of Guaranteed Income Policy" *American Journal of Sociology* 111(5): 1273-1326.

Mosher, Janet and Joe Hermer. 2010. "Welfare Fraud: The Construction of Social Assistance as Crime" Pp. 17-53 in *Constructing Crime: Contemporary Processes of Criminalization*. UBC Press: British Columbia.

WEEK 9: March 7
Globalization

* Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State" *American Journal of Sociology* 103(1): 144-181.

Drezner, Daniel W. 2009. "Bottom Feeders" *Foreign Policy*. November 19. 1-6.

WEEK 10: March 14

Guest Speaker: Attendance at Lecture is Mandatory

Questions due to course website before NOON on March 13

Consider the Cultural Context: AIDS Intervention in Botswana and Uganda

Stillman, Sarah. 2018. "America's Other Family-Separation Crisis" *The New Yorker*. October 29.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/11/05/americas-other-family-separation-crisis>

* Swidler, Ann. "Responding to AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: Culture, Institutions, and Health" pp. 128 - 150 in *Successful Societies: How Institutions and Culture Affect Health*. Eds. Peter Hall and Michele Lamont. Cambridge University Press. (Will be discussed Week 11)

II. SOCIAL CONTEXT SHAPES POLICY EFFECTS

WEEK 11: March 21

The Dosage Matters: Work-Family Policies in Comparative Context

* Rehel, Erin M. 2014. "When Dad Stays Home Too: Paternity Leave, Gender, and Parenting" *Gender & Society* 28(1): 110-132.

Boekmann, Irene, Joya Misra, and Michelle J. Budig. 2016. "Motherhood Earnings Penalties and Work-Family Policies: Is More Always Better" *Work In Progress*
<https://workinprogress.oowsection.org/2016/05/10/motherhood-earnings-penalties-and-work-family-policies-is-more-always-better/>

*** Term Paper Due to Quercus by 10 a.m.***

WEEK 12: March 28

Accountability and its Limits: Diversity Policy and Risk Policy in the United States

Pernell, Kim, Jiwook Jung, and Frank Dobbin. 2017. "Research: Hiring Chief Risk Officers Led Banks to Take on Even More Risk" *Harvard Business Review*. July.
<https://hbr.org/2017/07/research-hiring-chief-risk-officers-led-banks-to-take-on-even-more-risk>

* Dobbin, Frank and Alexandra Kalev. 2016. "Why Diversity Programs Fail" *Harvard Business Review*. July-August.

WEEK 13: April 4

Test 2