**Political Science 3319**

**Spring 2013**

**The Politics of Social Policy**

**Section: 27807**

**Lecture: Tuesday 11:30 to 1:00.**

**Heyne 28**

***Required Texts:***

* **Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, Winner-Take-All Politics, 2010**
* **William Julius Wilson, More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor In the Inner City, 2009**
* **Paul Tough, Whatever It Takes, 2009**
* **Harrell Rodgers, American Poverty in a New Era of Reform, 2006.**

**I do not place book orders with the local bookstores. Each of the required books can be ordered on line at much more competitive prices than those of local sellers. There are used copies on Amazon, often for less than $5.00. make sure that you obtain copies of the books and be sure that you have the latest editions.**

**CLASS STAFF**

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| **Instructor:** | Harrell R. Rodgers, Ph.D.  Professor of Public Policy and Public Finance, Department of Political Science |
| Office: | 406 PGH |
| Office Hours: | Tuesday and Thursday: 9-11:15 and by appointment |
| E-mail: | H[**rodgers@uh.edu**](mailto:rodgers@uh.edu) (Communicate with Professor Rodgers at this address, not on Blackboard) |
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**Teaching**

**Assistant**: Markie McBrayer **email: Markie.McBrayer@gmail.com**

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**Reference Materials:**

**Major Current Government Reports:**

* **Poverty in the United States.** Summary of annual census count of the American poor. The Census Bureau publishes a yearly report. You can find this report and other data on welfare and health insurance coverage at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).
* **Income in the United States.** Summary of annual census on income of Americans. See [census.gov](http://census.gov) web site and click on Income.
* **Families and Living Arrangements.** Summary of yearly census on American households. Published about every year. Series P20 of the Census data “Families and Living Arrangements.” (www.census.gov/populations.)
* **Indicators of Welfare Dependence,** Annual Report to Congress. Published every two years by Health and Human Services. (//aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/indicators)

**Historical Data: Not Currently Published**

* **Green Book.** Published 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, but it is not published on a regular schedule. Either Google “Green Book” or go to [gpoaccess.gov/green/index.html.](http://gpoaccess.gov/green/index.html.)
* **Status Report on Research on the Outcomes of Welfare Reform.** Annual report Health and Human Services**.**
* **TANF Annual Report to Congress.** Comprehensive analysis of state welfare reform plans. Google “TANF Annual Report to Congress.”

**Government Agencies that Publish Quality Studies**

* **Congressional Budget Office. (www.cbo.gov/)** Objective research on taxes, revenues, and spending.
* **Department of Health and Human Services**.[**http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov**](http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov)
* **Congressional Research Service. (**[**www.Loc.gov/crinfo/**](http://www.Loc.gov/crinfo/)**).**  In-depth studies of major public policies.

**Private Foundations, Institutes and University Research Centers**

* **Kids Count Data Book. (datacenter.kidscount.org/).** Published yearly be the Annie Casey Foundation. High quality data on child demographics by state.
* **Comparative Studies of Poverty. (**[**www.**lisdatacenter.org/](http://www.lisdatacenter.org/)). Luxembourg Income Studies.
* **Child Poverty: (**[**www.nccp.org/**](http://www.nccp.org/)**)** National Center for Children in Poverty.
* **Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin. (http://irp.wisc.edu)**
* **National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University,** [**www.nccp.org**](http://www.nccp.org)
* **Center for the Study of Poverty and Inequality. (** [**www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/**](http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/)
* **Center for Poverty Research, University of Kentucky,** [**http://www.ukcpr.org**](http://www.ukcpr.org)
* **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (www.cbpp.org/)** Excellent source for policy costs and impacts and tax analysis.
* **Citizens for Tax Justice. (www.ctj.org)** In-depth studies of state and federal tax policies.
* **Tax Policy Center. (**[**www.taxpolicycenter.org/**](http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/)**)**  In-depth studies of tax policies and federal programs.
* **The Urban Institute,** [**www.urban.org**](http://www.urban.org)
* **The Brookings Institute,** [**www.brookings.edu**](http://www.brookings.edu)
* **Kaiser Family Foundation,** [**www.kff.org**](http://www.kff.org)**. Excellent source for any topic related to health care.**
* **The Economic Policy Institute,** [**www.epi.org**](http://www.epi.org)**. Good source of data on contemporary economic issues.**
* **The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development,** [**www.oecd.org**](http://www.oecd.org)**. Comparative data across nations.**
* **LIS: Cross national Data Center.** [**www.Lisdatacenter.org**](http://www.Lisdatacenter.org)**. Excellent data and publications focusing on economic and social policies in a comparative context.**

Almost all the government data and the various center and institute studies can be downloaded using an adobe reader (easily downloaded from the census website).

**Course Focus:**

The course will concentrate on American poverty, social welfare policies, inequality, tax policy and the design, cost and impact of social welfare legislation. 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 and the American economy will be the major focus of the course.

**Learning Objectives:**

* Apply the rational model of policy analysis beginning with identification of a pressing policy problem, as well as its causes and consequences.
* Analyze alternative policy proposals across key criteria (e.g., effectiveness, sustainability) in order to develop clear policy recommendations.
* Synthesize unwieldy and or conflicting facts, figures, and information to identify what we know and need to know about a particular policy.
* Appreciate the political and institutional constraints on policymakers, policy analysts, and policy proposals within our system of governance.
* Recognize the significance of agenda setting as a form of political power and develop strategies for increasing attention to overlooked problems or perspectives.
* Evaluate the role of interest groups and policy networks in organizing political conflict, refining policy proposals, and shaping policy outcomes.
* Understanding the implementation process and accurately assess the likelihood of successful policy implementation over time.
* Appreciate the challenges and opportunities facing a policy analyst in our political institutions and develop strategies for increasing the odds that your policy analysis will be appropriately used.
* Recognize the advantages and limitations of policy analysis within a representative democracy, and critically evaluate the appropriate role for policy analysts in the policymaking process.
* Understand the interdependence of politics and public policy—how political forces shape policy choices and how policy choices re-shape future political dynamics.

**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. In some weeks there will be a deadline for the completion of the on-line assignments, including the quizzes over the reading assignments.

**Attendance**:

Attendance is required. **Attendance means being in class when the class begins and being present when the class ends.** I will give you two absences, with or without a valid excuse (such as a doctor’s excuse). After two absences, I will reduce your total grade point accumulation by 10 points. If this policy causes you to fail the class, so be it. Understand that I am not running a correspondence course. I expect you to be in class, on time, and a participant in the class. If you are not interested in doing so or cannot do so, please drop this class.

**You may not use your laptop or phone in my class. Turn both your phone and laptop off before the class starts and leave them off during the class.**

**Major Tests:**

There will be three major exams over the course materials. These exams will be taken in the Electronic Testing Center (Agnes Arnold, Room 101). The tests dates and materials to be covered are listed below.

**Test Dates:**

**First Exam: February 22nd**

Time Slot 1 - 9:00AM - 11:30AM

Time Slot 2 - 12PM—2:30PM

Time Slot 3- 3PM -5:30PM

**Second Exam: March 22nd**

Time Slot 1- 9:00AM - 11:30AM

Time Slot 2- 12PM -2:30PM

Time Slot 3 - 3:00PM - 5:30PM

**Final Exam: May 7th**

Time slot 1: 9:00AM-12:00PM

Time Slot 2: 12:00PM -3:00PM

Time Slot 3: 3:00PM -6:00PM

**PLEASE NOTE:**

All make-up exams will be given on Monday, December 10th, 12:00**-2 PM**. **You do not have the right to skip any of the exams**. Only one excused missed exam may be made-up. You must have a valid, documented excuse for missing an exam. Valid excuses include:

1. Sickness or hospitalization – Requiring the care of a Doctor
2. Death of an immediate family member.
3. Traffic accident on the way to the exam (police report will be required.)

Maintenance issues with your automobile, having overslept, work schedule conflicts will not be counted as an excused absence. If you are prone to making these kinds of excuses, you should not take this class. Ultimately, you are required to show up for the three exams on the specified dates. If you miss one, it better be important and documented.  
  
Students will need to reserve a testing time and space **FOR ALL EXAMS** by visiting the CLASS Electronic Testing Center (ETC) website at [**http://www.class.uh.edu/classidt/etc/etc\_res/students/index.php**](http://www.class.uh.edu/classidt/etc/etc_res/students/index.php).

Exams dates are posted on the CLASS ETC reservation software one month in advance. Students are responsible for remembering to make a reservation. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE ETC WITHOUT A VALID RESERVATION OR PICTURE ID (a picture ID consists of a valid UH Student ID Card or a Government Issued ID, Driver’s License or Passport.) There will be no exceptions!

**Readings Exams:**

On-line: There will be three ten point quizzes over the assigned readings, with one test scheduled before each major exam.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS:**

There will be two discussion boards. You will be given an article or articles 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 must post at least one original and one reply. Rules of "netiquette" apply! Flaming, comments that are derogatory to 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.

**How Are Discussion Board Posts Graded?** In grading your post the first question we ask is did you accurately summarize the argument or points made by the author or authors? If you do not provide evidence that you understand the points made in the article, we lower your grade. If you distort the author’s argument, we reduce your grade. Second, we ask if you gave hard thought to the arguments made. Did you really think through the arguments? Third, did you thoughtfully critique the arguments? Last, how thoughtfully did you respond to at least one other member of the class? We grade effort not your opinions. Can you do all this in three or four sentences or in five hasty minutes? No, not really. You will need to carefully think about the article and write several carefully crafted paragraphs.

Each discussion board is worth a maximum of 10 points for a potential combined total of 20 points for the two assignments.

How to analyzing the Logic of an Article:

1. The main purpose of the article is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The key question the author is addressing is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The most important information in the article is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. The main inferences/information in this article is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The key concept(s) we need to understand in this article is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The main assumption(s) underlying the author’s thinking is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. If you take this line of reasoning seriously, the implications are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. The main point(s) of view presented in this article is (are) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

How to Avoid the Problem of Egocentric Thinking

1. It’s true because I believe it.
2. It’s true because we believe it.
3. It’s true because I want to believe it.
4. It’s true because I have always believed it.
5. It’s true because it is in my selfish interest to believe it.

**Technical Assistance:**

If you have problems signing on to a quiz or any other type of assistance related to the operation of Blackboard, send a note to Markie McBrayer (Markie.McBrayer@gmail.com). You can copy the instructor in notes to the TAs or Vineeth, but if your problem is technical make sure you address your note to Vineeth.

**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 on­line 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.

**Components of your grade:**

**Your final grade will be determined by the following method:**

1. 3 major exams – maximum 100 points each
2. 3 On-Line Quizzes over readings—maximum 10 points each
3. 2 Discussion Boards – maximum 10 points each
4. Total maximum points that you can earn is 350.
5. Total the number of points that you receive for each assignment and test. Divide that number by 3.5. This is your course grade.

See the example below:

As an example, if you made the following grades:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Exam I:** | **78** |
| **Exam II:** | **84** |
| **Exam III:** | **92** |
| **Cumulative On-Line Quizzes** | **25** |
| **Cumulative on Discussion Boards** | **15** |
| **Total Points Earned (TPE)** | **2943299424** |
| **TPE/by 3.5** | **84** |

You would have earned a B in this class.

**THE FINAL GRADE SYSTEM IS AS FOLLOWS**

**94 or Above = A**

**90 - 93 = A-**

**89 - 87 = B+**

**86 - 84 = B**

**83 - 80 = B-**

**79 - 77 = C+**

**76 - 74 = C**

**73 - 70 = C-**

**69 - 67 = D+**

**66 - 64 = D**

**63 - 60 = D-**

**59 or Below =**

**How to Fail This Course**

A small number of the students who take this course make an F. In the spring of 2012 a total of seven students out of forty-five made an F. The question, of course, is how did they manage to turn the course into a failed effort?

I carefully review the record of any student who does poorly in this class. Some mistakes are obvious.

**First,** you need to remember that this is a hybrid course. It is designed with the requirement that you do significant work outside of class. That is, when you sign up for a hybrid you are agreeing to read and learn much of the materials on your own. If you do not want to do this, you can take the same class in non-hybrid format. It is offered each semester in both regular lecture and hybrid format. If you do not want to do much of the work outside of class, take the regular lecture class. Carefully read the syllabus for this course. You will see what you need to do out of class to keep up. If you do not want to do this, drop this class and take the other format.

**Second,** some students fail to regularly attend class. I cover a lot of material in class and you need to be present. Being present means being on time, paying close attention to the lectures, and asking questions about anything that you do not understand. I do take roll and I count off for absences.

**Third,** some students fail to do all the class assignments or do them very poorly. Each missed assignment results in a zero rather than a grade. Sloppy attempts will get you a few points, but cumulatively you will lose a lot of valuable points. Bad mistake! Make these mistakes a few times and you are in trouble.

**Fourth**, some students never review the PowerPoints or other materials that I post each week. Bad mistake!

**Fifth,** some students who are struggling in the class never ask for help, or wait until it is too late to get the help they need. We cannot help you after assignments are due or once the semester is over. If you need help, let us know.

The bottom line is that you cannot do well in this class without attendance, staying current with assignments, investing the time to learn the assigned materials, and by using all the tools that we make available to help you learn. Take advantage of them. If you are simply bored with the whole process of getting a degree, and do not want to invest time in the class, drop the course this semester and take it when you can commit to getting an education.

**COURSE PROTOCOLS**

**1. Read the Syllabus Carefully.** I 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.

**2. Missed On-Line Exams.** If you do not take the readings assignment exams or enter 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. There are no retakes of on-line exams. Give yourself enough time to take the tests and to submit posts 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.

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

**4. Dropping the Course.** You may drop the course passing up until the official university drop date. If you do not drop the course by then you will get a grade; the University will not allow me to give you a “W.”

**5. 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](mailto:Hrodgers@uh.edu). I normally check and answer mail seven days a week, even when I am traveling.

**Lectures, Reading Assignments and Exams:**

1. **January 15th: Poverty Across the Globe**

* Reading: Rodgers, Chapters 1 and 2
* Reading: On-Line: Rank, Below the Line
* Reading: Hacker and Pierson: Introduction: The Thirty Year War

1. **January 22nd:** **American Poverty: Numbers and Demographics**

* Reading: Hacker and Pierson, Chapter 1
* Reading: On-line: Meyer and Wallace, Poverty Levels and Trends in Comparative Perspective

**III.)** **January 29th: Market Failure: The Growth of Income and Wealth Inequality**

* Reading: Tough, Chapter 1
* Reading: Hacker and Pierson: Chapter 2

**IV.) February 5th: Family Complexity: Changes in American Family Structure**

* Reading: On-Line: Cancian and Reed, Family Structure, Childbearing, and Parental Employment: Implications for the Level and Trend in Poverty
* Reading: Wilson, Chapter 4
* Reading: On-line: Jack Shonkoff, “Building a Foundation for Prosperity on the Science of Early Childhood Development.”

Quiz One. Answer ten questions over readings for lectures 1-5. Due by February 17th, by 11:30PM.

**V & VI.) February 12th and 19th: The New Welfare System**

* Readings: Rodgers, Chapter 5 and 6
* Reading: Hacker and Pierson, Chapter 3

(Exam One over Sections I, II, III, IV and V on Friday, February 22nd)

**VII.) February 26th: The Causes of Poverty: The Debate**

* Reading: Rodgers Chapter 4
* Reading: Wilson, Chapters 2 and 3
* Readings: Hacker and Pierson, Chapter 4
* Readings: Tough, Chapters 2 and 3**.**

**VIII.)** **March 5th: The Relationship between Poverty and Crime**

* Reading: On-Line, Western, Mass Imprisonment
* Reading: Tough, Chapter 4
* Reading: Hacker and Pierson: Chapter 5

**Discussion Board 1: Original Post by March 6th by 11:30 PM. Responses by March 10th by 11:30 PM**

**IX.) March 19th: Calculating the Costs of Crime**

* + Reading: On-Line, Western, The Politics and Economics of Punitive Criminal Justice
  + Reading: Hacker and Pierson: Chapter 6
  + Reading: Tough, Chapter 5

**Quiz Two: Answer ten questions over readings for lectures 6-9. Due by March 17th, by 11:30 PM.**

**(Exam 2 over Sections VI, VII, VIII, and IX on Friday March 22nd .)**

**X.)** **March 26th: Major Social Welfare Programs (Part 1)—Social Security**

* + Reading: Wilson, Chapter 5
  + Readings: Hacker and Pierson, Chapter 7.
  + Reading: Tough, Chapter 6

**XI) April 2nd: Major Social Welfare Programs (Part II) --EITC, SNAP and ACA**

* Reading: Hacker and Pierson, Chapter 8
* Reading: Tough, Chapter 7
* Reading: Hacker and Pierson: Chapter 9

**XII.) April 9th: The Affordable Care Act: The Plan in One Act**

* Reading: Tough, Chapter 8
* Reading: Tough, Chapter 9

**Bulletin Board 2: Read on-line article and respond. Original post due by April 10th by 11:30 PM. Response(s) due by April 14th by 11:30PM.**

**XIII.)** **April 16th: What Works with the Poor? How the Documentaries Help us Understand Policy Complexities**

* Readings: Hacker and Pierson: Chapter 10
* Readings: Hacker and Pierson: Conclusions: Beating Winner-Take All

**XIV) April 23rd: The Challenges Ahead**

* Reading: On-line: Rank, Future Directions
* Reading: Tough, Chapter 11

**Quiz Three: Answer ten questions over readings for lectures 10-14. Due April 26th by 11:30 PM.**

**(Exam 3 over Sections X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, May 7th.)**

**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.**](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.**