PUBP 861: Culture and Social Policy Analysis
Desmond Arias
Wednesdays 7:20-10:00
Office Hours 3-5 Wednesday and 3-4 and 7:20-8:20 Thursday

Course Description

This course will examine social policy in comparative perspective. The goal of the course will be to develop an understanding of the dynamics and characteristics of social policy in different countries. This course will consider how different cultural and political dynamics affect the choice of social policies. During the semester we will discuss these issues at a theoretical level and then will examine retirement, gender, health, education, and migration policy. The course will conclude with a discussion of how policy paradigms change.

Learning Objectives

1. Students should develop an understanding of the diversity of social policies across different cultures.
2. Student will hone their skills researching and writing about social policy.
3. Students will develop skills in critiquing the work of their peers and making scholarly presentations.

Readings

All readings are available through the library website, on the Internet, or through Blackboard.

Assignments

Draft Introduction: 5%
Reaction Paper: 15%
Reaction Presentation: 10%
Peer Critique: 10%
Final Paper: 50%
Participation: 10%

Assignment Descriptions

Final Paper (50%): This is a research paper that students may want to think about as a draft of a scholarly article or as preparation for field examinations. The paper should focus on a core research question related to the underlying themes of the class and should engage readings and data presented in class but also work that the student has done beyond the assigned readings for class. The paper should be built around a clear research statement and present evidence to defend that statement. This paper should be 8000-10,000 words in length.
Draft Introduction (5%): This paper should be approximately two pages long and should be a version of the introduction to your final paper. I should include a paragraph explaining the importance of the subject of the paper, a paragraph laying out the proposed argument of the paper, and a paragraph or set of paragraphs that provide an explanation of the evidence that will be discussed in the paper as well as an outline of the content of the paper.

Reaction Paper (15%): In this five- to seven-page paper the student will examine and critique two or more readings from a particular week. The student will develop an argument and critically analyze the readings around this theme. The student may want to think of the paper as a book review that seeks to organize an analysis and synthesizes of a set of articles from one week's readings. The student should provide discussion questions at the end of their paper and the paper should be distributed to the entire class the Monday before the class meeting at which we will discuss the readings.

Reaction Presentation (10%): The student will deliver a 10-minute presentation on their reaction paper on the day that the class is discussing those readings.

Peer Critique (10%): The student will constructively critique another student’s reaction paper after the reaction paper presentation.

Assigned Readings: Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are optional.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

All work for this class, unless otherwise noted in writing by the instructor, is the responsibility solely of the student who should undertake such work unaided by others. Under no circumstances should students allow to appear in their work text written by others that is not fully credited and does not appear in a way that makes apparent that such text was taken directly from another source. All ideas and concepts that come from other sources should be fully referenced even if the text itself explains those concepts is written solely by the student. Papers will be analyzed for plagiarism through web applications such as Turnitin.com and SafeAssign.

This course will fully adhere to the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs policy on plagiarism. That policy is quoted below:

“The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs. It constitutes
a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable."

“Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources are essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.”

“Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.”

“The faculty of the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the university. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.”

“To help enforce the SPGIA policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPGIA policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.”

Course Calendar:

Week 1 (1/21): Class Introduction


Week 2 (1/28): General Theories


**Week 3 (2/4): General Theories**


**Week 4 (2/11): Core Theories and Regional Variation**


Week 5 (2/18): Retirement


*Campbell, Andrea L. and Kimberly J. Morgan. “Federalism and the Politics of Old-Age Care in Germany and the United States.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 38: 8 (2005): 887-914*

Week 6 (2/25): Retirement


Week 7 (3/4): Employment / Gender


March 11—Spring Break

Week 8 (3/18): Family Policy and Children


http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/pubs/pdf/rrep405.pdf
DRAFT INTRODUCTION DUE

Week 9 (3/25): Health


Week 10 (4/1): Health


Education

Week 11 (4/8): Education


Week 12 (4/15): Education


Week 13 (4/22): Transformation


**Week 14 (4/29): Conclusion**


**Final paper is on May 6.**