



HS 4333/6333 – Families, Legislation and Public Policy
Course Syllabus, Fall 2016
Section 1, MWF – 10:00 – 10:50 am
50 Lloyd Ricks Watson Building

Instructor

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Course Description

This course provides an examination of the impact of legislation and public policy on the well-being of the family with emphasis on policy and family change.

Students will explore the concepts of the family-impact lens, which is a perspective that can be used by educators, advocates, and policymakers to examine how policy decisions directly and indirectly influence families and family functioning.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are as follows:

1. To help students become more aware of how frequently policy impacts families
2. To define “family” and to identify why family definitions are important
3. To explore benefits families provide to society and how society influences families
4. To review the policy process
5. To introduce students to the family impact lens
6. To analyze various “hot topic” issues using the family impact lens

Course Materials

Required Book (only one title is required):

Schwartz-Nobel, L. (2002). *Growing up empty: How federal policies are starving America's children*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. – **Softbound version**

or

Schwartz-Nobel, L. (2002). *Growing up empty: The hunger epidemic in America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. – **Hardbound version**

Recommended Textbook:

Bogensneider, K. (2014). *Family policy matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do* [3rd Edition]. New York: Routledge.

When purchasing these books, please find the cheapest alternative possible, whether it be a used copy or a copy found online. Amazon.com often provides the cheapest options when purchasing used copies. Please do not purchase a brand new copy unless you plan on keeping these books.

Topic outlines, additional readings, and study materials will be posted on MyCourses throughout the semester.

Course Evaluation and Assignments

1. **Exams** – For All Students (3 @ 50 points each, 100 points total, 1 dropped exam)

Three exams are scheduled throughout the semester (September 23, October 21, & December 5). With the exception of an emergency or other unforeseeable circumstance, these exam dates are not likely to change.

Exam questions will come from the materials presented in class or from assigned readings and study materials. Exams will consist of matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and/or short answer format.

The final exam (Exam #3) will not be comprehensive in nature.

The lowest exam score will be dropped. If a student does not take an exam, including the final exam (Exam #3), this exam score will be dropped as the lowest score. If taking the final exam might improve your overall grade, students are encouraged to take it.

2. **Daily Insights** – For Undergraduate Students Only (40 @ 1 point each, 38 points total, 2 dropped insights) – **Due at the end of each class (except exam days) (students must be present to receive points)**

Mississippi State University policy strongly encourages students to attend each scheduled class period. To encourage and track attendance, students will submit at the end of each class period a brief handwritten description of the most important insight learned in class that day. This insight may be something that was learned from class materials, in-class activities, or from other students. This insight can be something learned for the first time or an existing idea that was simply reinforced. Students are to respond to the following questions:

- **What?** What is the most important insight you gained from today's lecture?
- **Why?** Why is this insight the most important thing you learned from today's lecture?

Example of Daily Insights write-up:

Date: 8/17/2016

Name: Brandan Wheeler

What? (½ pt.) Why family definitions matter

Why? (½ pt.) I have known for a while that most people choose who their family is. However, I had not thought about why defining family is important. This discussion helped me to realize that government policies and regulations define families to determine who is eligible to receive benefits. This perspective helps me to better understand why same-sex couples have fought so hard for marriage equality: These couples are seeking the same recognition and benefits that heterosexual couples receive through legally recognized marriages

Total: 1 pt.

For students' convenience, a Daily Insight form is included at the end of this syllabus and will be posted on MyCourses. Students are welcome to use this form or notebook paper as long as the prescribed format is followed.

Rationale for this assessment technique:

- Provides incentive to come to class consistently (Think of these points as wages for a day's work on a job).
- Rewards students who come to class consistently but may not score well on exams or assignments.
- Allows the instructor insight into what materials are considered most important.

3. **Weekly News Article Discussion** – For All Students (12 @ 2 pts. each, 22 points total, 1 dropped article) – **Due each Wednesday at the end of class (starting August 24, 2016)**

Many students are not aware of how frequently families are influenced by policy issues. To help students become more aware, each Wednesday's class (starting August 24, 2016) is devoted to discussing news articles students have found that week.

Directions:

- Find a current news article that discusses how a policy, rule, or regulation influences families
- Bring the news article to class each Wednesday (Students will turn these articles in for credit)

- Come to class prepared to discuss the news article in partnerships or small groups and before the entire class
- Students **must be in class** to receive credit for these news articles and discussions

News Articles can be found from any news source (online or print). Some common news sources include (but are not limited to):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| - <i>Starkville Daily News</i> | - <i>USA Today</i> |
| - <i>U.S. News and World Report</i> | - <i>New York Times</i> |
| - <i>Wall Street Journal</i> | - Yahoo News |

Rationale for this assignment:

- Help students become more aware of policy's impact on families
- Provide discussion points
- Help students to identify potential topics for the mini policy brief assignment

4. APA Formatting Tutorial – For All Students (30 pts.) – Due via email before 10:00 am on September 30, 2016

Several assignments this semester require students to use APA formatting (e.g., Hunger in America Paper and Mini Policy Brief). As many students have never learned APA formatting, students will be complete an APA formatting tutorial created by the Library services at the University of Southern Mississippi

(<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/apatutorial/tutorialindex.html>). This tutorial consists of a pre-test, a self-directed tutorial, and a post-test quiz. The pre-test and post-test assessments include 10 questions each and include a space for students to enter their own and their instructor's email addresses to confirm completion of the tutorial.

Grading for this assignment will be as follows:

- Pre-test quiz (10 pts.) – Full points will be given regardless of score on the pre-test quiz
- Self-Directed Tutorial (10 pts.) – Full points will be awarded for completion of the self-directed tutorial
- Post-test quiz (10 pts. possible) – Students will be awarded whatever score they receive on the post-test quiz

Additional materials will be provided to students, including a "Citation Helps" reference sheet, to help with APA formatting on the later assignments.

5. Hunger in America Paper – For All Students (25 points) – Due via email before 10:00 am on October 17, 2016

Students are required to read the book *Growing up Empty* (Schwartz-Nobel, 2002), which discusses the issue of hunger in America. Students will write a 3-4 page reflection paper in response to this book.

When writing your paper, please respond to the following questions:

- Before reading the book:
 - o When you hear about people going hungry, what are your immediate thoughts as to who these people are and why they are going hungry?
- After reading the book:
 - o What is Schwartz-Nobel's (2002) main argument? What are some specific examples from the book to support this argument?
 - o How has your viewpoint of hunger in America changed since reading this book?
 - o What policy changes do you think need to be made to address hunger issues in America? (When you respond to this question, please provide specific examples of the policy, why it needs to be changed, who should implement these changes and how these changes will be supported – public support, who will pay for it, etc.)
- Be sure to use proper APA citations anytime you cite Schwartz-Nobel (2002), Bogenschneider (2014), or any other outside source (see the "Citation Helps" handout posted on MyCourses or the Purdue University's Online Writing Lab for citation guidelines - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)

Grading for this paper will be as follows:

- 20 points for content
- 5 points for grammar (including citations in APA formatting, punctuation, run-on sentences, and readability of paper)

Some suggestions when writing this paper:

- Include a cover sheet, which includes your name, title of your paper, class information, etc. (It will be an automatic 2 point deduction if paper has no cover sheet!)
- The paper should be written in 12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and be at least 3 pages in length (to count as a full page, there must be at least half a page of text)

- Be sure to describe information from the book or class materials as though the reader has not read the book or attended class. In other words, will the reader understand the context of what has been written? If not, provide more detail.
- Include an introductory paragraph in which the reader is introduced to the themes being discussed
- The second paragraph should discuss the first theme identified, the third paragraph will discuss the second theme, and so forth
- Include a concluding paragraph that briefly summarizes the main themes and gives the reader a final reminder of what was discussed
- As part of proofreading efforts, please read your paper out loud. Awkwardly written sentences or unclear ideas will emerge
- Please do not provide a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book. Identify two or three very specific examples from the book that can be used to illustrate/support the themes being discussed.
- Try not to use too many quotations. Try to summarize the ideas shared by the quotations. If quotations are used, please cite them properly!!!!

6. **Mini Policy Brief** – For All Students (65 points total) – **Due via email before 10:00 am on November 21, 2016**

As various “hot topic” issues will be examined through the family-impact lens, students will select a topic related to family policy that interests them. As part of this assignment, students will:

- Prepare a short project proposal, in which students will provide a brief one-paragraph description of the issue they intend to explore and at least 5 references they may use for the project. These references will be formatted in proper APA formatting
- Summarize a combination of news articles and scholarly materials that will help them to understand multiple perspectives of the issue (students must include at least 2 perspectives of the issue being explored)
- Explain how this issue impacts families and family functioning
- Identify what policy currently exists or is being considered regarding this issue
- Consolidate all of this information into a mini-policy brief (template will be provided)

Further details regarding this assignment will be provided on MyCourses.

Some students are very passionate about specific topics. While this passion is important (and highly encouraged), please try to be respectful of others whose opinions may oppose your own opinions. Rather than advocating for one specific solution, try to take an approach that allows you to educate yourself and others by examining multiple perspectives on an issue.

Grading for this assignment will be as follows:

- Proposal (15 pts. possible)
- Mini Policy Brief (50 pts. possible)

Rationale for this assignment:

- Allow students an opportunity to apply what is being learned in class to a topic of their interest
- Allow students to think more deeply about their own position on an issue

7. Lead Hot Topic Discussion – For Graduate Students Only (28 points) – To be scheduled with instructor

Graduate students will be asked to lead one of the Hot Topic discussions near the end of the semester. Graduate students will create a Mini Policy Brief as outlined above, which they will present to the entire class.

Further directions will be provided regarding this assignment.

Rationale for this assignment:

- Provide graduate students an opportunity to present before a group of people
- Provide graduate students practice teaching in a classroom setting
- Provide graduate students an opportunity to summarize information in a concise manner

8. Policy Brief Research Paper – For Graduate Students Only (50 points) – Due via email before 10:00 am on November 30, 2016

Whereas the mini-policy brief assignment is a brief summary of an issue of the student's choosing, this policy brief research paper will be a more detailed write-up of the same issue. Graduate students are asked to write a 6-8 page paper that provides more background information to the subject of their mini policy brief. Additionally, this assignment will give students practice writing in APA format.

Further directions will be provided regarding this assignment.

Rationale for this assignment:

- Provide graduate students an opportunity to extrapolate summary data into a more detailed paper
- Provide graduate students practice in using APA formatting while writing

9. Extra Credit – For All Students (5 points maximum) – Due via email before 10:00 am on November 30, 2016

Video clips are a great resource in illustrating and reinforcing concepts that are taught in class. As such, students are invited to submit video clips to receive extra credit in this course. Each video clip submitted will receive one point of extra credit, as long as the following information is submitted:

- Video's weblink (e.g., Youtube)
- A brief one-paragraph description of the video and how it relates to class materials
- A discussion question that can be used to promote discussion about the content of the video clip (For example, "How does this video demonstrate...?" or "What can we learn about ... from this video clip?" – Try not to use simple "Yes/No" types of discussion questions: "Do you agree with what was shown in this video?")

Additional extra credit opportunities will be announced throughout the semester.

Grade Breakdown for Undergraduate Students:

Grade	Percentage	Point Range
A	100 – 90%	280 – 252 pts.
B	89 – 80%	251 – 224 pts.
C	79 – 70%	223 – 196 pts.
D	69 – 60%	195 – 168 pts.
F	59% or below	167 – 0 pts.

Grade Breakdown for Graduate Students:

Grade	Percentage	Point Range
A	100 – 90%	320 – 288 pts.
B	89 – 80%	287 – 256 pts.
C	79 – 70%	255 – 224 pts.
D	69 – 60%	223 – 192 pts.
F	59% or below	191 – 0 pts.

Students alone are responsible for their grade in the class. Consistent attendance and participation in class, the on-time completion of assignments, studying for exams, and doing well on all assignments and exams will result in a good grade in this course. Remember, too, grading comes from multiple areas of assessment. Doing well in one or two areas will not guarantee an A grade. Grading will be kept up-to-date on MyCourses throughout the semester. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to review graded materials. If you have questions regarding a score received or feedback provided on an assignment, you are welcome

to meet with the instructor to discuss the grade or feedback received. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to review grades and feedback!

General Class Information

Late Policy:

All assignments will be deducted 2 pts. for each day (including weekends) an assignment is late. Each day is counted as the 24-hour period from the time it was due until the next day at that same time. **Being absent the day an assignment is due does not excuse you from submitting the assignment before the deadline!!** If you submit an assignment via email, it is your responsibility to confirm it was delivered before the deadline.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Mississippi State University Policies and Procedures handbook (AOP 12.09; <http://www.policies.msstate.edu/policypdfs/1209.pdf>):

“Upon registration, the student accepts the responsibility of attending all classes and completing all in class and out of class work that the instructor formally assigns. When absence from class is essential, the student must inform the instructor through an official means of communication or provide satisfactory documentation of the impending absence unless prescribed otherwise in the syllabus. If possible, all arrangements should be made prior to the absence. The student should discuss and document the scope and timeframe for completion of missed work with the instructor in an agreed upon timely manner. The student should recognize that failure to comply with a documented mutually agreed upon procedure could result in a grade penalty, if prescribed in course syllabus.”

On those occasions when a student must be absent, please inform your instructor before class, if possible. Upon returning to class, please provide proper documentation to support the absence so that make-up work can be submitted. Please note that daily insight points are used to track attendance.

Make-Up Policy:

If a student misses class due to an excused absence (see AOP 12.09 documentation above for approved excused absences), he or she may make up any missed daily insights or in-class activities by providing proper documentation to support the absence. Unexcused absences cannot be made up.

Students are responsible to find out what materials were missed and the nature of make-up assignments. All make-up assignments must be **completed within one week** of returning to class (or before the final if absence occurs in the final week of class). Failure to make up the

assignment during this one-week period will result in a zero for that assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted after the final exam has been administered!

Cell Phones:

Please turn off your cell phones during class. Please also leave your cell phones in your pocket, bag, or backpack.

Laptops:

You are welcome to use laptops for taking notes only. You are NOT to use laptops in class for surfing the web, going to your favorite social media sites, or distracting other students. If you are seen staring intently at your computer during class discussions, do not be surprised if you are called on to answer questions or make comments! **I reserve the right to ban all laptops if I see they are being used for non-class related activities.**

Student Honor Code:

Mississippi State has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: "As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do." Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Student will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information, please visit: <http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy>.

Title IX:

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU's educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU's Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 325-8124 or by e-mail to titleix@msstate.edu. Additional resources are available at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security/title9-12.pdf>, or at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>.

Support Services:

Students who need academic accommodations based on a disability should visit the Office of Student Support Services, 01 Montgomery Hall, call 662-325-3335, or visit the website at www.sss.msstate.edu.

Other Information:

Sometimes changes become necessary, such as changes to the tentative schedule below. However, the content in this syllabus (assignment details, scoring, etc.) will not change throughout the semester. Any changes to the schedule will be made via class announcements and/or via email.

Tentative schedule (schedule is subject to change):

Class	Date	Topics	Assignments Due
1	8/17/2016	Syllabus / Class Introductions	
2	8/19/2016	Overview of News Article Discussions; Topic 1 – What is Family? Why Is Family Important?	
3	8/22/2016	Topic 1 – What is Family? Why Is Family Important?	
4	8/24/2016	News Article #1 Discussion	News Article #1 Due
5	8/26/2016	Topic 2 – Reciprocal Socialization – Exploring How Society Influences Families	
6	8/29/2016	Topic 2 – Reciprocal Socialization – Exploring How Society Influences Families	
7	8/31/2016	News Article #2 Discussion	News Article #2 Due
8	9/2/2016	Topic 3 – Defining Family Policy	
	9/5/2016	Labor Day – No Class	
9	9/7/2016	News Article #3 Discussion	News Article #3 Due
10	9/9/2016	Topic 4 – How Does the Political Process Work?	
11	9/12/2016	Topic 4 – How Does the Political Process Work?	
12	9/14/2016	News Article #4 Discussion	News Article #4 Due
13	9/16/2016	Topic 5 – Why We Should Focus on Families and Why We Don't	
14	9/19/2016	Topic 5 – Why We Should Focus on Families and Why We Don't	
15	9/21/2016	News Article #5 Discussion	News Article #5 Due

16	9/23/2016	Exam #1	Exam #1
17	9/26/2016	Topic 6 – Bridging Controversy and Building Consensus	
18	9/28/2016	News Article #6 Discussion	News Article #6 Due
19	9/30/2016	Topic 6 – Bridging Controversy and Building Consensus	APA Formatting Tutorial Due
20	10/3/2016	Topic 7 – Becoming Involved in Family Policy and Why We Need a Class on Family Policy	
21	10/5/2016	News Article #7 Discussion	News Article #7 Due
22	10/7/2016	Topic 7 – Becoming Involved in Family Policy and Why We Need a Class on Family Policy	
23	10/10/2016	Topic 8 – Family Impact Lens Toolkit	
24	10/12/2016	News Article #8 Discussion	News Article #8 Due
	10/14/2016	Fall Break – No Class	
25	10/17/2016	Discussion on <i>Growing Up Empty</i> Book	Hunger in America Paper due
26	10/19/2016	News Article #9 Discussion	News Article #9 Due
27	10/21/2016	Exam #2	Exam #2
28	10/24/2016	Hot Topic Discussion – Hunger in America	
29	10/26/2016	News Article #10 Discussion	News Article #10 Due
30	10/28/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #2*	
31	10/31/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #3*	
	11/2/2016	To Be Determined	
	11/4/2016	Work on Mini Policy Brief Proposal	
32	11/7/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #4*	
33	11/9/2016	News Article #11 Discussion	News Article #11 Due
34	11/11/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #5*	
35	11/14/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #6*	Policy Brief Proposal and References Due
36	11/16/2016	News Article #12 Discussion	News Article #12 Due
37	11/18/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #7*	
38	11/21/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #8*	Final Mini-Policy Brief Due
	11/23/2016	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
	11/25/2016	No Class – Thanksgiving Break	
39	11/28/2016	Hot Topic Discussion #9*	
40	11/30/2016	Review for Final Exam	Extra Credit due
41	12/5/2016	Final Exam (8:00-11:00 am)	Final Exam

*Hot Topic items tend to change over time, especially during presidential election years, so specific topics will be announced. Topics being considered include Raising Minimum Wage, Free College, Paid Family Leave, Planned Parenthood/Abortion, Gun Control, etc.

Daily Insights Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

What? (What is the most important insight you gained from today's lecture?) (½ pt.)

Why? (Why is this insight the most important thing you learned from today's lecture?) (½ pt.)

Total: _____ pts.