

**SYLLABUS FOR  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES 535  
A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE IN POLICYMAKING  
SPRING 2009**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Mark Lederer, Lecturer  
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**OFFICE HOURS:** I will be available one half-hour before and after class in Room 155, Van Hise. Other times may be arranged by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Public policies have an impact on the economic and social well being of families. Students enrolled in HDFS 535 will examine the effects state, federal and local government decisions have on families. They will explore the framework that defines policy options and the processes used to make policy choices. Students will examine the roles played by officials in government and non-government organizations. Current issues will be assessed and options explored in light of their political, fiscal and social implications for families and governments. The course will combine theoretical and practical approaches to policy issues affecting families.

The course will be taught to provide students with an understanding of and appreciation for:

1. The framework in which governments address issues affecting families and the political and institutional limitations on government actions;
2. The methods used by government to define issues, assess choices and make decisions;
3. The roles played by individuals in various positions in the policy process;
4. Societal values, attitudes and perceptions that influence decisions about family policy options;
5. Theories, principles and concepts that can be used to assess the impact of policy choices on families and family policy; and
6. The potential roles for the family professional in the policy process and the educational versus advocacy approach to policy development and discussion.

Students will examine methods of assessing policy options and presenting choices from different perspectives. We will look at ways in which the needs of families are considered and whether systematic approaches to family policy development provide useful tools to policy makers.

I intend to fully include all students in the activities of this course. Students with disabilities should let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate. I will maintain confidentiality in the information you share with me.

### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

Bogenschneider, K. (2006). *Family policy matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ooms, T., & Preister, S. (Eds.) (1988). *A strategy for strengthening families: Using family criteria in policymaking and program evaluation*. Washington, D.C. The Family Impact Seminar.

These texts are available through University Bookstores.

Additional readings will be assigned from a coursepak that is available at the L&S copying center in 6120 Social Science Building. The hours are 7:45 to 4:10.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Course attendance and participation are expected of all students. Reading assignments should be completed prior to each class. We will discuss concepts, theories, and ideas, and we will look at issues from practical and theoretical perspectives. Students must be prepared in order to benefit from these discussions. Class discussions, readings and issues raised by the readings and discussions will form the basis for the mid-term and final exams.

In order to receive credit for the course all of the following assignments must be completed:

1. Readings and Course Participation. Reading assignments for the semester follow. Additional items may be added although I have tried to be as complete as possible in the materials assigned. Students are expected to read the assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them and apply the principles and ideas they offer. For the most part, there are no right or wrong answers. There are certainly no right or wrong points of view, and a free-flowing discussion about differences will be encouraged. Be prepared to substantiate perspectives with supportive materials from readings, assignments, and personal experience.
2. Identify Your State Legislators. Using the information found at [www.legis.state.wi.us](http://www.legis.state.wi.us), identify your state representative and state senator and write a one-paragraph biography for each including committee assignments, leadership positions and personal and professional background. If you are from another state, you may use your home state legislators for this exercise. Due January 28.

3. Assessment of Media Coverage of Family Policy Issue. During the first month of class follow the media coverage of a family policy issue. Using electronic, internet, and print media, develop an assessment of common perspectives and differences in the coverage. In a four-page, double-spaced paper, outline the issues and briefly summarize the media sources you used. Attach a complete list of all readings and sources at the end of your paper, but not the articles. Write a critique of the reporting including the points of contention and the policy implications for families. Due February 25.
4. Mid-Term Exam. A mid-term exam will be given on March 9. The exam will be based on class readings, discussions and the issues we raise during the first seven weeks of the semester.
5. Letter to a Public Official. Using the materials you collected and your assessment, write a one-page letter to a public official about a family policy issue. Use the letter to lay out your position and substantiate that position with information from the assessment. Submit the letter to the official and share the response with the class. Due March 25.
6. Small Group Issue Project: Written Assignment and Class Presentation. The class will be divided into 6 small groups. Each group will fully research a policy issue that has distinct family implications. Completion of the assignment will require each group to:
  - ❖ Define the issues, assess the current debate and options for potential action;
  - ❖ Critique potential policy options and assess their possible effects using family impact analysis, the theory of the paradox, and other concepts that bring a family perspective to policymaking;
  - ❖ Identify the policy option(s) you believe best address the issues and substantiate the position with information collected in the process of conducting your research; and
  - ❖ Using the information developed in response to the first three bullets, prepare a position paper – 15-20 pages, double spaced.

The papers will be presented by the groups in class April 27 and 29 and May 4. Presentations should be 20 minutes with class discussion of 10 minutes to follow the presentations.

A draft of the paper may be submitted for review and suggestions 2-3 weeks prior to presentation.

7. Self-Assessment of Group Project. Provide a two-page assessment of your small group project. A format for the assessment will be provided. Due May 10.
8. Final Exam. The final exam will be a take-home exercise distributed to the class on May 6. The exam will pose a theoretical question to which you will have to respond. Answers will be due no later than Wednesday, May 13, at 4:00 p.m.

## **COURSE GRADING:**

Each of the assignments has the following point values. Assignments are due on the dates indicated.

<u>Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
20	Class Participation (Half of this amount will be awarded based on your small group presentation)	
10	Legislative Biographies	January 28
25	Assessment of Media Coverage of a Family Policy Issue	February 25
30	Mid-Term Exam	March 9
10	Letter to a Public Official	March 25
45	Small Group Issue Projects Written Reports and Class Presentations	April 27 and 29 May 4
10	Self-Evaluation of Small Group Projects	May 10
60	Final Exam	Distributed May 6 Due May 13

Grades will be determined based on the points accumulated and the application of the following percentages to arrive at a letter grade.

A	92-100%
AB	87-91%
B	81-86%
BC	75-80%
C	70-74%
D	60-70%
F	Below 60%

**Students are responsible for completing assignments in order to receive a final grade.**

## WEEKLY OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

### January 21:

Overview of the course and course requirements.  
Review of the syllabus.  
Discussion of expectations and goals for the semester.

### January 26: A family perspective in policymaking

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Do we need a family perspective in policymaking? (Chapter 1). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Is policymaking focused more on families or individuals? Are professionals adequately trained in family science, theory, and methodology? (Chapter 2). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

### January 28: A rationale for a family perspective in policymaking

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). What is family policy? What is a family perspective in policymaking? (Chapter 3). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Do families matter? (Chapter 4) In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Are family issues a legitimate focus on policymaking? (Chapter 5) In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

### February 2-4: The role and function of the Governor and Legislature in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Assembly Chief Clerk. (1998). *How a Bill Becomes a Law*. Madison, WI: Author.

### February 9: Policymaking frameworks

Zimmerman, Shirley L., (1995). *Understanding family policy: Theories and Applications*. (pp. 85-141). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

## **February 11: Seeking out alternatives in family policy**

Rappaport, J. (1981). In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 5. (pp.1-25).

## **February 16: Working with theory and practice in policymaking**

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). How can we bridge the controversy and move family policies forward? The theory of paradox. (Chapter 9). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

## **February 18: A theory of social responsibility and engagement**

Rousseau, Jean Jacques. (1762) *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right: Book I*. (pp. 1-8.) [http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon\\_01.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm)

King, Martin Luther. (1963). *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. <http://almaz.com/nobel/peace/MLK-jail.html>.

## **February 23: A strategy for policy assessment**

**Text:** Ooms, T. & Preister, S., (Eds.) (1988). *A strategy for strengthening families: Using family criteria in policymaking and program evaluation*. (pp. 5-29). Washington, D.C: The Family Impact Seminar.

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2006). *Policy matters: Twenty state policies to enhance states' prosperity and create bright futures for America's children, families and communities*. (pp. i-ix). Author: Washington, D.C.

## **February 25: An educational model**

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Which approach is best for getting involved in family policy: advocacy or education? (Chapter 13). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

## **March 2: The changing nature of the family**

Orthner, D.K. (1990). The family in transition. In D. Blankenborn, S. Bayme, & J.B. Elshtain, (Eds.), *Rebuilding the family nest: A new commitment to the American family*. (pp. 93-118). Milwaukee: Family Service America.

Popenoe, D. (1990). Family decline in America. In D. Blankenborn, S. Bayme, & J.B. Elshtain, (Eds.), *Rebuilding the family nest: A new commitment to the American family* (pp. 39-51). Milwaukee: Family Service America.

#### **March 4: The individual and the community**

Coontz, S. (1997). What we really miss about the 1950's. *The way we really are: Coming to terms with America's changing families* (pp. 33-50). New York, NY: Basic Books.

Putnam, R.D. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1) 65-78.

#### **March 9: Mid-Term Exam**

#### **March 11: The influence of fiscal policy in policymaking**

Peter G. Peterson Foundation. (2008). *The state of the union's finances: A citizen's guide to the financial condition of the United States government.* (pp. 1-17). Author: New York, NY.

#### **March 13-22: Spring Break. Enjoy but not too much!**

#### **March 23: Social Security Reform - An issue that crosses generations**

Lowenstein, Roger. (2005). *The Conservative New Deal.* **The New York Times Magazine.**

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2003). *A new organization of time over working life, summary.* (pp. 1-9). Author: Dublin, Ireland.

#### **March 25: Health Care Reform**

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Can a Family-Focused Approach Benefit Health Care? William J. Doherty. (Chapter 7) In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Lentz, Scott. (2005). Health Care Cost Growth, Drivers, and Implications for States. *Improving health care quality while curbing costs.* Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars: Madison, WI.

#### **March 30: School Finance**

Bogenschneider, K. (2004). A policymaker's guide to school funding: approaches to use and questions to ask. (pp. 1-18). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars.

#### **April 1: Delivering state services locally - the Wisconsin experience**

Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau. (2007). *Community Aids (Financial assistance to counties for human services).* (pp. 1-8; 10-13; Appendix I, II, IV and VI). Madison, WI: Author.

Swedeen, B., (2002). *Waiting for family support: Supporting families who have children with disabilities*. (pp. 6-11 and 14-19). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities.

#### **April 6: Higher education as a family issue**

Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. (2005). State of Wisconsin Blue Book. *Executive Branch: University of Wisconsin System*. (pp. 527, 529, 537-538). Madison, WI: State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration.

Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau. (2005). *University of Wisconsin Tuition*. (pp. 1-8; 7-12; 22-24 and Tables 1 and 2.) Author.

#### **April 8: Families and the Criminal Justice System**

Guest Lecture presented by Rev. Jerry Hancock of the Prison Ministry Project, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Madison, WI.

#### **April 13: Marriage Policy**

Ooms, Theodora. (2002). *Marriage and Government: Strange Bedfellows?* Washington, D.C., Center for Law and Social Policy.

#### **April 15: Defining a balance between work and family**

Hewlett, S.A. & West, C. (1998). Managerial greed and the collapse of economic security. *The War Against Parents: What We Can Do for America's Beleaguered Moms and Dads*. (pp. 57-87). New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Wolfe, A. (1998). Developing civil society: Can the workplace replace bowling? *The Responsive Community: Rights and Responsibilities*, 8(2). (pp. 41-47).

Cramer, L. (1992). Work and family policy: An international perspective. *Family Resource Coalition Report*, 2.

#### **April 20: Can Policies Be Developed to Promote Good Parenting**

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). Do we know what good Parenting is? Can public policy promote it? (Chapter 6). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

**April 22: Understanding the past and developing an agenda for the future**

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). What can we learn from the roots of American social policy about building enduring family policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? (Chapter 10). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

**Text:** Bogenschneider, K. (2006). What current policies and proposals are changing the political landscape? (Chapter 8). In K. Bogenschneider, *Family Policy Matters: How policymaking affects families and what professionals can do*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bernanke, Ben S. (2007). *The Level and Distribution of Economic Well-Being. A Speech to the Omaha, NB, Chamber of Commerce*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Reserve Board.

**April 27 and 29 and May 4: Small group presentations.**

**May 6: Final exam distribution and discussion. The final is to be completed and returned by Wednesday, May 13, at 4:00 p.m.**

**Course evaluation.**