

**ENVISIONING A BETTER FUTURE: ADVANCED TOPICS  
IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

<b>Course Number:</b>	SW 395K	<b>Instructor:</b>	Miguel Ferguson
<b>Unique Number:</b>	96625	<b>Office Number:</b>	3.122b
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer 2007	<b>Contact Info.:</b>	232-5914 <a href="mailto:miguelf@mail.utexas.edu">miguelf@mail.utexas.edu</a>
<b>Meeting Time/Place:</b>	2.132 Mon-Weds 1:30-4:00	<b>Office Hours:</b>	Mon & Weds: Noon-1:00, or by appt.

<b>I.</b>	<b>Course Description</b>
	This course will focus on contemporary understandings of social and economic justice and analyze a wide variety of policy proposals designed to promote human well-being across the life course. Specific attention will be paid to the ways in which poverty and economic inequality hinder the well-being of families and communities and frustrate American ideals of democracy and opportunity.

<b>II.</b>	<b>Standardized Course Objectives</b>
	<p>Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand and analyze the various definitions and understandings of social and economic justice;</li> <li>2. Understand various historical trends in social welfare and causes of contemporary social and economic problems;</li> <li>3. Identify and systematically analyze issues related to race, gender, and ethnicity; social class, sexual orientation, and other dimensions which are associated with privilege, discrimination, domination, and oppression;</li> <li>4. Intelligently discuss the limits of research methods upon which social and economic policy is often based;</li> <li>5. Understand comparative and international perspectives on the promotion of social and economic justice;</li> <li>6. Understand normative ideals associated with competing political and ideological stances towards social and economic policy;</li> <li>7. Understand a broad array of policies, both real and figurative, designed to</li> </ol>

	<p>promote human well-being in general and with regard to specific population sub-groups;</p> <p>8. Analyze alternative models, strategies, tactics, and modes of social and political action directed towards the promotion of these goals.</p>
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<b>III.</b>	<b>Teaching Methods</b>
	<p>The method of the course is founded upon student participation. As professional advocates, it is essential for credentialed social workers to be able to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. All students are encouraged to participate through discussion in class, via e-mail, or with the instructor and teaching assistant during office hours. The format will include lectures, films, guest presentations, and class exercises.</p>

<b>IV.</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>
	<p>This course uses three books and a course reading packet. Course readings are drawn from an extensive assortment of articles, book chapters, essays, and electronic media sources. A copy of the reading packet has been put on three-hour reserve in the LRC.</p> <p>The following books are required (and available at the co-op);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>In Our Hands</u> by Charles Murray</li> <li>2. <u>What's Wrong with a Free Lunch?</u> by Philippe Parijs</li> <li>3. <u>Citizens of the Empire</u> by Robert Jensen</li> </ol>

<b>V.</b>	<b>Course Requirements</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Class Participation:</li> <li>2. Historical Analysis:</li> <li>3. Presidential Policy Briefs:</li> <li>4. Review of Books:</li> <li>5. 50-year Policy Briefing:</li> </ol>	<p>15%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>25%</p>

<b>Class Participation</b>
<p>Students will be graded on the quality (not necessarily the quantity!) of their contribution to the collective learning objectives of the class. This includes participation in class, email discussions or electronically shared information, office visits with the instructor, and activities that relate to course material undertaken outside of class. At the end of the semester students will provide a written assessment of their participation, to include a numeric grade (based on 100 points). The instructor will use this information before assigning the final participation grade.</p> <p><b>Please note that more than one absence will automatically result in a participation grade at least one grade below an “A” (and be sequentially reduced for each subsequent absence).</b></p>

### Historical Analysis Paper

The three readings from Brown, Long, and Sinclair in the course packet offer a radically different vision of society (so radical that two of the three authors were assassinated in part due to their beliefs and actions associated with furthering their beliefs). Your task in this assignment is to summarize and analyze the main points presented in two of the three visions. In particular, the paper should address the following:

- How did these visions differ from the status quo of the time?
- What particular interests favored/opposed these visions? Why?
- Though none of these visions succeeded, provide an intelligent discussion of how different the policy and social justice landscape would be in the U.S. if the visions had come to pass.
- Finally, what is to be learned from these visions and how could lessons from these efforts inform contemporary thinking and action in regards to social policy and economic justice?

Papers should be 6-8 pages, 12 point font, 1.5 spaced. **Papers are due June 20<sup>th</sup>.**

### Presidential Policy Brief

For better or worse, Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush have increased the power and authority of the executive branch. This assignment requires students to analyze one significant policy proposal from a Democratic and Republican presidential candidate. The briefings should cover the following points:

- 1) Provide a brief summary of the candidate's political experience and the policy proposal.
- 2) Importance. Why is the proposal important/significant?
- 3) Objectives. Succinctly summarize what the proposal intends to accomplish.
- 4) Costs/benefits. Describe the potential benefits and costs/limits of the proposed legislation (focus on specific populations if this is relevant).
- 5) Social work values. Using the values and ethics that guide the profession, conclude the briefing with a brief argument why social workers should either support or oppose the bill in question.

To limit the briefing to one page per candidate proposal, use concise language and choose your words wisely. The briefings should use single spacing and 11-point font (to clarify, there should be two pages, total). **The briefings are due July 2.**

### Book Review

Students must review the books by Murray and Parijs. Reviews should be 5-7 pages, 12-point font and 1.5 spaced. The grade for the reviews will be based on how clearly you demonstrate your understanding of the books, the depth and vigor of the analysis, and how you respond to the following:

- a) What main points are presented?
- b) How effectively and in what ways do the books cover the subject of social policy, poverty, and politics? What are the primary strengths and weaknesses of the books

- in general and the policy proposals in particular?
- c) How well and in what ways do the books relate to the other course readings and information that has been discussed in class? Use 2-3 specific examples.
  - d) How “feasible” are the specific arguments or ideas contained in the book, and how would social and economic justice be improved/decreased if they were to come to pass?
  - e) Would you recommend the book? To what audience?

**The review of the books is due July 16 (or earlier, if you prefer!)**

### 50-Year Policy Briefing

Like a modern day Rip Van Winkle, you awaken one day to find yourself inexplicably living fifty years in the future. Given your intense interest in social policy, you soon discover that the policy landscape of 2057 is much different from what you remember. You are amazed to discover that all U.S. citizens enjoy access to health care, paid maternity/paternity leave, free higher education tuition and vocational training, a right to employment and decent housing, and sufficient retirement income. Your task in this briefing is to describe how these changes came to pass, the basic mechanisms of funding and program implementation, and the ways in which society has changed because of the policies that are in place (with an emphasis on issues related to social and economic justice).

Students should work in groups of two. The briefings should be 20-25 minutes in length, and students should be prepared to answer questions.

**More information about this assignment will be given during the third week of class.**

### Grades

Grades will be determined as follows:

100 - 94 =A	93 - 90 =A-	
89 - 87 =B+	86 - 84 =B	83 - 80 =B-
79 - 77 = C+	76 - 74 =C	73 - 70 =C-

VI.	The University of Texas and School of Social Work Policies
	<p><b>A. Students with Disabilities or Special Learning Considerations</b></p> <p>Please let me know if you have a learning and/or other disability and if you require special accommodations.</p> <p>The UT-Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Any student with documented disabilities (physical or cognitive) who requires academic</p>

	<p>accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.</p> <p><b>B. Safety</b></p> <p>As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in/observing agency settings and/or in the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should also notify instructors regarding any safety concerns.</p> <p><b>C. Confidentiality</b></p> <p>Personal disclosure is not an expectation or a requirement in this course. However, it might be appropriate for students to talk about personal information as it relates to learning about a particular topic. Students are expected to adhere to all professional standards of confidentiality during the semester.</p>
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<b>VII.</b>	<b>Additional Course Policies</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Try to live a conscious life.</li> <li>2. Attend class regularly.</li> <li>2. Turn assignments in on the due dates.</li> <li>3. Participate fully in class discussions and other in-class activities. Sharing differences of opinion and ideas with other students, the instructor, and guest speakers is encouraged and will be respected.</li> <li>4. Present written and oral presentations professionally.</li> <li>5. Use APA Style for referencing. The <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i> is the standard style manual used by the School of Social Work.</li> </ol>

## Course Schedule

Date	Description	Readings
June 4 & 6	Definitions of social and economic justice Back to the future: past visions of progress Theories on the origins of the welfare state	<b>Brown</b> , <i>Provisional constitution</i> <b>Long</b> , <i>Share our wealth</i> <b>Sinclair</b> , <i>EPIC</i>
June 11 & 13	Child & family policy Maternity leave Politics of parenthood  Guest Lecture: Prof. Evan Carton	<b>Guzman et al</b> , <i>How children are doing</i> <b>Sherriff</b> , <i>Balancing work and family</i> <b>Galinsky</b> , <i>Economic benefits of high quality...</i> <b>Edin et al</b> , <i>A peek inside the black box</i>
June 18 & 20	The color of policy Welfare reform Poverty  <b>*Historical Analysis paper due*</b>	<b>Leondar-Wright</b> , <i>State of the dream</i> <b>Rank</b> , <i>Effect of poverty...</i> <b>Skokpol</b> , <i>Targeting within universalism</i> <b>Scott &amp; Leonhardt</b> , <i>Class in America</i>
June 25 & 27	Work and labor policy	<b>Beem</b> , <i>Work, parenthood...</i> <b>Galinsky</b> , <i>When work works</i> <b>Families &amp; Work</b> , <i>Generation and gender</i>
July 2	Social insurance Social Security  <b>*Presidential Policy Brief due*</b>	<b>Kotlikoff</b> , <i>From strollers to workers</i> <b>Cauthen</b> , <i>Whose security?</i> <b>Graetz</b> , <i>Families with children</i>
July 9 & 11	Comparative perspectives on policy Foreign Policy Globalization	<b>Sachs</b> , <i>Our generation's challenge</i> <b>Hills &amp; Waldfogel</b> , <i>A "third way" in welfare reform?</i> <i>Social policy in Denmark</i>
July 16 & 18	Normative perspectives on policy For the common good Student Policy Briefings	<b>Phelps</b> , <i>The case for a market-based solution</i> <b>Crittendon</b> , <i>Welfare state vs. a</i>

	Conference call interview with Prof. Bob Jensen (7/18)  <b>*Book Review Due*</b>	<i>caring state</i> <b>Fraser, After the family wage</b> <b>Albert &amp; Hahnel, Socialism as it was always meant to be</b>
July 23	Student Policy Briefings	No readings assigned

### **Government Agencies**

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Youth – <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/>
- ASPE – <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/hspincpov.htm>
- NICHAHD National Children’s Study – <http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov>
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census – <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics – <http://www.bls.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, PD&R Information Service – <http://www.huduser.org/>

### **Think Tanks and Advocacy Groups on Children’s Issues**

- Alliance for Children and Families – <http://www.alliance1.org/>
- Annie E. Casey Foundation – <http://www.aecf.org/>
- Center for Law and Social Policy – <http://www.clasp.org/>
- Chapin Hall Center for Children (Chicago) – <http://www.about.chapinhall.org/>
- Child Care and Early Education Research Connection—<http://www.childcareresearch.org/>
- Children’s Defense Fund – <http://www.childrensdefense.org>
- Child Welfare League of America – <http://www.cwla.org/>
- Child Trends – <http://www.childtrends.org/>
- Institute for Child and Family Policy (Columbia) – <http://www.childpolicy.org/>
- National Center for Children in Poverty (Columbia) – <http://www.nccp.org/>

## **Think Tanks and Advocacy Groups on Social Policy in General**

Brookings Institution – <http://www.brookings.edu/>  
Center for Budget and Policy Priorities – <http://www.cbpp.org/>  
Center for the Study of Social Policy – <http://www.cssp.org/>  
Institute for Women’s Policy Research – <http://iwpr.org/>  
Food Research and Action Center – <http://www.frac.org/>  
Heritage Foundation – <http://www.heritage.org/welfare/>  
Hudson Institute Welfare Policy Center – <http://wp.hudson.org/index.cfm>  
National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty – <http://www.nlchp.org/>  
Urban Institute – <http://urbran.org/>  
(Texas) Center for Public Policy Priorities – <http://www.cppp.org/>  
(Texas) Public Policy Foundation – <http://www.texaspolicy.com/>

## **University-based Research Centers**

National Poverty Center, University of Michigan – <http://www.npc.umich.edu/>  
Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin –  
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>  
Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, University of Kentucky –  
<http://www.ukcpr.org/Index1.html>  
Rural Poverty Research Center, University of Missouri –  
<http://www.rprconline.org/>