SOCIAL POLICIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
Child Development/Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning 182 – Fall 2008  
August 18, 2008

Instructor: Dr. Tama Leventhal

Class Time: Tuesday, 1:30-4:00p.m.

Location: EP 157, Stevens Library

Office hours: Monday 3-5 pm (Leventhal)

Contact information:

Professor Leventhal: Office in Eliot-Pearson Bldg, Rm 103; 105 College Avenue; email (tama.leventhal@tufts.edu) (Please allow at least 24 hours for a response.)

Course Objectives:

1. To apply developmental theory and research on children, youth, and families to an understanding of social policy.
2. To introduce students to the content of current child and family policy in the United States.
3. To consider multidisciplinary perspectives on child and family policy.
4. To examine the policy process and how public problems are selected, defined, measured, and addressed.

Requirements:

This class will use both a lecture and a seminar format. All students are expected to: (1) attend class regularly; (2) read the assigned material in preparation for the class meeting; (3) prepare written questions raised by the readings; (4) contribute actively to the class discussions; and (5) graduate students will have additional assignments as noted.

Readings: A set of required readings is available through the course blackboard site.

Graded Written Assignments (additional details provided below):

Two reaction papers (20% of grade each)

Debate counter-position paper (20% of grade)

Indicators paper (10% of grade graduate students; 15% of grade undergraduates)

Additional Assignments:

Written questions from readings due each class period (5% of grade). For each class (starting September 9th), students are to prepare 2 discussion questions raised by the readings. Written questions are to be submitted to the blackboard website by 12 pm the day before class (Monday) unless noted otherwise on course outline. The questions will be used as a basis for class discussions and should be written in a manner that generates discussion. For example, avoid question such as: “Has research been done…” Rather, provide questions such as: “What kind of research would…” In addition, questions
should generally be about the assigned topic and should generate discussion of the assigned readings (rather than opinions). Note that students who add the course late must submit questions for missed lectures the following week (i.e., their second class).

**Discussion presentation (graduate students only; 5% of grade).** During the second class period, 1-2 students per session (depending on class size and schedule) will sign up to be present during selected class periods. In consultation with the professor, each student will be responsible for presenting a summary of a selected article on the assigned topic. The article must be an original, peer-reviewed research article (not assigned). At least a week prior to the day of presenting, students should contact the professor to discuss the selection of article. No later than Monday at 10 am prior to the day of presenting, students should e-mail the slides to the professor to review. Students will have approximately 15 minutes to present and should limit themselves to no more than 7 slides (see handout). The slides will be posted on blackboard after the class session.

**Class participation:** 5% of each student’s grade is based on class participation. A key goal of class discussion is to integrate the readings with the lecture materials. Students are expected to participate actively in this endeavor. Class attendance is obviously a fundamental component of participation. Please contact the professor at least 24 hours in advance of class if you cannot attend the session.

**Debate (15% of grade):** Each student will have an opportunity to participate in a debate/town meeting. The two topics generated from recent media events that will be discussed and debated are: (1) Should contraceptives be distributed at school-based health clinics in Gloucester, MA? (October 28th) and (2) Should the HOPE IV program (demolition of public housing) be eliminated in Memphis, TN? (December 2nd). These debates are to focus on the broad policies issues at hand and not the details of the actual events as outlined in the media. All class members will be assigned to one side of a topic and to a specific role. Each student will have an opportunity to present his/her position. PRESENTATIONS SHOULD NOT BE WRITTEN OUT AND READ. The roles will entail: Leading speaker, expert/key witnesses, and closing/rebuttal speaker. In preparation for the role, all students will hand in to the professor 6 key points on which they are basing their position; due on the day of the debate. The points should be bulleted (not a paper) and brief and drawn from the following sources: (1) 2 different assigned articles, (2) 2 lecture points, and (3) 2 outside research articles (original, peer-reviewed journal articles) or books; hand in the outside articles/book chapters with your notes.

**Other Issues:**

A request for an incomplete in the course must be submitted no later than November 4th.

Any student who requires special assistance due to a disability should register with the Office of Disability Services (Sandra Baer) for official approval.
ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

(a-b) **Reaction papers:** Students are expected to demonstrate a thoughtful reading that considers the merits of the ideas, perspectives, and information presented in the readings and lectures. A reaction paper should always begin in the first paragraph with a clearly stated position. The purpose of these papers is for you to provide a critical analysis of issues raised by the assigned articles. **Do not just summarize readings.** Your analysis should demonstrate an understanding of what the writer(s) is conveying, as well as an effort to relate the writer’s position to problems, issues, or ideas from course material (other readings and lectures to date) that may clarify the meaning or significance of your position/reaction.

Reaction paper # 1—due September 23rd: Use readings and lecture materials from sessions 1 to 4 (this includes readings on September 23rd) to react to the Anderson (1994) and Rimer (2007) articles. Issues you may wish to consider (but do not have to) are: How do these pieces inform policy about the multiple social contexts of children and youth and how they may influence development? What do they convey about how social policies may affect children and families? What is the relationship between social context and policy? Make sure that your comparison of the articles discusses policy implications in some capacity. Your paper should cite at least 3 different assigned articles other than the reaction articles (preferably from at least 2 lectures) and at least 3 different lecture points (again, preferably from at least 2 lectures). Papers should be 3 pages.

Reaction paper # 2—due October 14th: A new president will be elected in November. If you were to recommend to the new president that our current welfare policy, TANF, be altered in at least one fundamental way to improve the lives of children and families, what would it be? Use readings and lecture materials from sessions 1 to 7 (this includes readings on October 14th) to support your argument. Your paper should cite at least 3 different assigned articles other than the reaction article (preferably from at least 2 lectures) and at least 3 different lecture points (again, preferably from at least 2 lectures). Papers should be 3 pages.

(c) Debate #1 or Indicators paper #1—due November 4th
(d) Debate #2 or Indicators paper #2—due December 9th

**Debate paper:** Take the opposite side of the issue you were assigned for the debate, and write a reaction paper supporting that position. In your paper, cite as evidence at least 2 of each of the following: (1) assigned articles, (2) lecture points, and (3) outside research article (original, peer-reviewed journal articles/books). Hand in the outside articles/chapters with your paper. Papers should be 3 pages in length.

**Indicators paper:** Consider the debate topic in which you are NOT participating (Should contraceptives be distributed at school-based health clinics in Gloucester, MA? or Should the HOPE IV program be eliminated in Memphis, TN?). Review the condition, problem, or strength around which it is built. Then consider child, family, neighborhood/community, state or national indicators that would: (1) describe the problem to help plan a program or policy, (2) monitor the problem over time, and (3) evaluate the success of a program or policy implemented to address the problem. Choose 3 indicators for each of the listed categories and provide rationales for your choice of each specific indicator (see example). Provide the source for each indicator. The sources for your indicators must include: (1) at least 2 federal data bases, (2) at least 2 state, city, or local databases, and (3) at least 2 different, well-established websites of reputable, high-profile organizations (per list in class/blackboard). Papers should be 3-5 pages in length. Additional background information will be provided in class and on blackboard.

**Example:** Indicator: Percentage of children under age 6, in Massachusetts, who are not properly immunized. One of the goals of this policy is to increase the number of children who begin their school careers “ready to learn.” Good health is central to being able to pay attention
and do well in school; being fully immunized is a prerequisite for healthy development. It is also required by law before children can enroll. The percentage of children who are not immunized helps public health officials target their immunization efforts, and also identifies for school officials families that might need other supports to help their children get off to a good start. Indicator available from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, MassCHIP database (http://masschip.state.ma.us)

All deadlines are also noted in the course outline.

Note: All papers should be typed, and double-spaced (12-point font, 1-inch margins). Use the reference style appropriate to your major. Always use quotations sparingly; however, never plagiarize. Students who do not follow these style guidelines and those specified for each assignment will be marked down accordingly. All papers are due at the end of the designated class period and will be NOT be accepted by e-mail or fax. Students will be marked down one grade for each day that a paper is late.
COURSE OUTLINE

1. **September 2\textsuperscript{nd}**  
   **Introduction**


2. **September 9\textsuperscript{th}**  
   **Child Development and Social Policy: Knowledge for Action**


3. **September 16\textsuperscript{th}**  
   **Child Development and Social Policy: Action for Knowledge (or the Policy Process)**


*Reaction paper #1 readings (not for discussion questions):*


4. **September 23\textsuperscript{rd}**  
   **Poverty: Definitions, Trends, Causes, and Consequences**


**Recommended readings:**


**Reaction paper # 1 due**

5. **September 30th** Welfare Reform and Reauthorization: Impacts on Children and Parents


**Read one of the two articles:**


**The policies:**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/tanf_factsheet.html

Reauthorization: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/spotlight/welfarereauthorized.htm
6. October 7th    Teenage Sex, Pregnancy, and Parenthood and Child Welfare

Guest lecturer: Ms. Sarita Rogers, Director of Home Visiting, MA Children's Trust Fund


Recommended reading:

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO POST QUESTIONS THIS WEEK**

7. October 14th    Library and Indicator Research

Guest lecturer: Laurie Sabol

Class will meet from 1:30-3pm library at Tisch 223


**Reaction paper # 2 due in Dr. Leventhal’s box by 5 pm**

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO POST QUESTIONS THIS WEEK**

8. October 21st    Marriage, Families, and Fathers

Guest lecturer: Ms. Marilynn Sager and Mr. Peter Coulombe, Massachusetts Department of Revenue/Child Support Enforcement


*Recommended reading:*

---

**The policy:**
Healthy Marriage Initiative: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/ (see general information)

---

**9. October 28th Early Intervention: A Head Start or Not and Debate #1**


*Recommended readings:*
*Economics of Education Review* (2007), Vol 26(1), Special Issue, “*The Economics of Early Childhood Education***

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO POST QUESTIONS THIS WEEK**


---

**10. November 4th Juvenile Justice**

*Guest lecturer:* Ms. Francine Sherman, JD, Director Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project, Boston College Law School


*Recommended reading:*

**Debate or Indicator paper # 1 due**
11. **November 18th**  
**Housing and Neighborhoods**

*Guest lecturer:* Veronique Dupere, Ph.D., Post-Doctoral Fellow, Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, Tufts University


**The policies:**
http://www.hud.gov/progdesc/pihindx.cfm

12. **November 25th**  
**Families and Work: Caring for Children and Youth**


**The policy:**

13. **December 2nd**  
**Wrap-Up, Open Topic TBD by students and Debate #2**

TBA

**YOU DO NOT HAVE TO POST QUESTIONS THIS WEEK**


*Recommended reading:*


**Debate or Indicator paper due December 9th in Prof. Leventhal’s box by 4 pm**