

**Social Welfare Policy**  
**PSC 73906 / SOC 85700 / WSCP 81000**  
**Professor Janet Gornick**  
**Spring 2021**  
**Tuesdays 4:15pm–6:15pm**

**Faculty:** Janet Gornick  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment. Email with questions at any time.

**Course Description:**

This course will examine social welfare policy in the United States, in historical and cross-national perspective.

We will begin with an overview of the development of social welfare policy in the United States. We will focus on crucial historical periods – including the Civil War years, the Progressive Era, the New Deal, the Great Society, and the “welfare reform” of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Second, we will analyze a set of contemporary challenges that call for active social welfare policy responses in the United States – including inequality, poverty, housing affordability, retirement security, mass incarceration, and the need for care, both paid and unpaid.

Third, we will survey selected social policy lessons from other high-income countries, especially in Europe, where social provisions are typically more extensive than they are in the United States.

Students will complete weekly reaction papers, and a semester-long research project which will culminate in a paper.

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## Comments on Course Structure and Plan:

### *Virtual Teaching Platform*

The course will be taught using Zoom. The professor will serve as host and will provide links that enable joining. Students do not have to have their own Zoom accounts.

Zoom (as most students know by now!) allows participants to activate both audio and video capacity. In general, students should utilize their video option so that they can be seen; if turning on the video creates any hardship or discomfort, please feel free to discuss with that with the professor. When not speaking, students should activate the mute function.

### *Assignments and Grading*

- attendance and participation in discussions 20% of grade
- (eight) weekly reaction papers, one per week, starting with Class 4 (Feb 23)  
[a handout describing this assignment will be distributed](#) 20% of grade
- presentation of reading in one class session  
[a handout describing this assignment will be distributed](#) 10% of grade
- two presentations related to semester-long research project 10% of grade
- research project, culminating in final paper due on May 11  
[a handout describing this assignment will be distributed](#) 40% of grade

### *Attendance*

Weekly attendance is required but – of course – exceptions will be made to meet students' needs. If you need to miss a class (or to arrive late or leave early), please inform the professor before the session.

### *Learning Goals*

- develop an understanding of the history of social welfare policy in the United States
- gain familiarity with a set of contemporary challenges that call for active social welfare policy responses in the United States – including inequality, poverty, housing affordability, retirement security, mass incarceration, and the need for care, both paid and unpaid.
- learn about social policy in other high-income countries, with a focus on lessons for the United States

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**Course Overview:****I. Introduction**

1 February 2 Course Introduction

**II. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Historical Development**

2 February 9 History 1

3 February 16 History 2

**III. U.S. Social Welfare Policy – Contemporary Challenges**

4 February 23 Inequality

5 March 2 Poverty

6 March 9 Housing

7 March 16 Retirement

8 March 23 Student Presentations – Research Project Plans

March 30 SPRING BREAK

9 April 6 Incarceration

10 April 13 Care Provision I

11 April 20 Care Provision II

**IV. Social Policy Lessons from Other High-Income Countries**

12 April 27 Lessons from Europe

**V. Student's Research**

13 May 4 Student Presentations – Research Projects

14 May 11 Student Presentations – Research Projects / Final Papers Due

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**Books:**

These books are required reading. I recommend that you buy all of them. You should be able to purchase the whole set for about \$100 – or much less, if you buy e- and/or used versions.

Some are available for free, via the GC Library, either in pdf or to be used with an e-reader.

- [For February 9, 16](#)

*Oxford Handbook of U.S. Social Policy*

Edited by Daniel Béland, Kimberly J. Morgan, and Christopher Howard, 2014

Oxford University Press; (six) chapters will be distributed in pdf, by the professor

- [For February 23](#)

*The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do about It*

Timothy Noah, 2013

Bloomsbury Press / available from Amazon, starting at \$9.99

- [For March 2](#)

*\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*

Kathryn Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, 2016

Mariner Books / available from Amazon, starting at \$6.66

- [For March 9](#)

*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*

Matthew Desmond, 2017

Broadway Books / available from Amazon, starting at \$12.99

- [For March 16](#)

*Rescuing Retirement: A Plan to Guarantee Retirement Security for All Americans*

Teresa Ghilarducci and Tony James, 2018 (be sure to read 2018 edition)

Columbia University Press / available from Amazon, starting at \$19.95

- [For April 6](#)

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Michelle Alexander, 2010 (be sure to read 10th Anniversary edition, published 2020)

The New Press / available from Amazon, starting at \$17.16

- [For April 13 and 20](#)

*For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States*

Nancy Folbre (Ed.), 2012

Russell Sage Foundation Press / available from Amazon, starting at \$17.83

- [For April 27](#)

*Lessons from Europe: What Americans Can Learn from European Public Policies*

R. Daniel Kelemen (Ed.), 2013

Sage - CQ Press / available from Amazon, starting at \$4.45.

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**Required Reading:**

<b>February 9</b>	<b>Class 2</b>	<b>History 1</b>
	Reading:	<i>The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Social Policy</i> Daniel Beland, Christopher Howard, K. Morgan (Eds.), 2014 Oxford University Press
		Chapter 2. Social Provision before the Twentieth Century Chapter 3. The Progressive Era Chapter 4. The Great Depression and World War II
<b>February 16</b>	<b>Class 3</b>	<b>History 2</b>
	Reading:	<i>The Oxford Handbook of U.S. Social Policy</i>
		Chapter 5. From the Fair Deal to the Great Society Chapter 6. The U.S. Welfare State Since 1970 Chapter 7. Cross-National Perspective on US Welfare State
<b>February 23</b>	<b>Class 4</b>	<b>Inequality</b>
	Reading:	<i>The Great Divergence: America's Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do about It</i> Timothy Noah, 2013 Bloomsbury Press
<b>March 2</b>	<b>Class 5</b>	<b>Poverty</b>
	Reading:	<i>\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America</i> Kathryn Edin and H. Luke Shaefer, 2016 Mariner Books
<b>March 9</b>	<b>Class 6</b>	<b>Housing</b>
	Reading:	<i>Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City</i> Matthew Desmond, 2017 Broadway Books
<b>March 16</b>	<b>Class 7</b>	<b>Retirement</b>
	Reading	<i>Rescuing Retirement: A Plan to Guarantee Retirement Security for All Americans</i> Teresa Ghilarducci and Tony James, 2018 Columbia University Press

**April 6**

**Class 9**

**Incarceration**

Reading:

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*  
Michelle Alexander, 2010  
The New Press

**April 13**

**Class 10**

**Care Provision I**

Reading:

*For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States*  
Nancy Folbre (Ed.), 2012  
Russell Sage Foundation Press

Chapter 3. Unpaid Care Work  
Chapter 4. Paid Care Work  
Chapter 5. Valuing Care

**April 20**

**Class 11**

**Care Provision II**

Reading:

*For Love and Money: Care Provision in the United States*

Chapter 6. The Care Policy Landscape  
Chapter 7. The Disparate Impacts of Care Policy  
Chapter 8. A Care Policy and Research Agenda

**April 27**

**Class 12**

**Lessons from Europe**

Reading:

Lessons from Europe:  
What Americans Can Learn from European Public Policies  
R. Daniel Kelemen (Ed.), 2013  
Sage - CQ Press

Chapter 1. Introduction: Why Look to Europe for Lessons?  
Chapter 2. Gender, Employment, and Parenthood  
Chapter 4. Pensions: Who is Learning from Whom?  
Chapter 5. Labor Market Policy: Toward a "Flexicurity" Model  
Chapter 6. Immigration Policy: A Transatlantic Comparison  
Chapter 10. Transatlantic Lesson Drawing