

## **Sociology 0130: The American Heritage: Democracy, Inequality, and Public Policy**

Instructor: Michael J. White

Office Hours: Maxcy 210 Wed 3-5PM

Discussion Leader: Elise Mortensen

Fall 2014 MWF 1-1:50PM

Location Sayles Hall 005

**Update as of 22August 2014**

### **Description**

How does one build a just society? Since the origin of the Republic, equality has been professed as a fundamental American value. Within this long-standing ethos, the United States is experiencing another round of active debate, at times trenchant, about inequality and the position of government with respect to that inequality. In this course our initial discussions focus on the debate over the proper role of government and the responsiveness of human behavior to policy initiatives. These issues are then examined further through several contemporary public policy issues, such as the controversies over immigration reform, health care, the family, race relations, and the impact of Great Recession. Throughout, we examine how the social science research community contributes to the development of public policy. In Fall 2014 we will pay particular attention to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War on Poverty and associated Civil Rights activity.

### **Prerequisites and Skill-Building:**

Soc 130 does not presume any prior background in social science or policy. It is suitable for first-year students. Soc 130 is designed to help students develop skills leading to more critical assessment of public issues. At the end of the semester, students should be better able to gather information about social policy issues, write more clearly about these issues, and understand better the role of social science in public decisions. Soc 130 is also designed to prepare students to advance more deeply into specific sociological and social policy topics.

### **Format**

Lectures MWF. Discussion sessions to be arranged. Soc 130 maintains an active website via *Canvas*. Assignments and lecture outlines will be posted on the website after appearing in class. Required course readings are available via the website and/or OCRA and are noted as such on the syllabus. Additional sessions (walking tour, film) may be scheduled outside of standard hours. The course includes weekly "Policy IQ" exercise using iClickers.

### **Requirements**

Requirements for the class include a short letter to the editor, four policy memos, one of which is a group memo. (The lowest grade of these memos is dropped). There is a mid-term mini-exam to provide early feedback. There is an hour examination at the end of term (no examination in the final exam period), and a final policy research paper. Policy memos are succinct treatments of a particular public policy topic. These memos help develop concise writing skills in the context of a real-world policy application. The final research paper offers analysis of a particular public policy issue of the student's choice. The paper will be approximately 12 pages double-spaced (~3600 words), exclusive of figures, tables. Details will be announced later in the semester. All students are expected to keep up with the reading, and participate in section discussion and iClicker activity. *Obtain an iClicker from the Sciences library and register it right away.*

### Grade Distribution

“Letter to the Editor”	5%
Policy Memos	30% [10% each, lowest of the 4 dropped]
Mini-Exam (midterm in-class)	10%
Hour Exam (end-of-term in-class)	20%
Final Paper	30%
Participation	5%

### **Readings**

The reading list includes material from contemporary books and articles in the fields of social science and public policy. These books are available at the Brown Bookstore, and they are on reserve at the Rockefeller Library. Additional readings are available via OCRA (linked via the course website on *Canvas* ) and are noted in the week that they occur. Several weeks identify readings *FOR MORE*. These delve into the topic in further detail, provide recent journalistic commentary, or identify recent publications in academic social science journals. (Some of these added readings are also available online.)

### Books

NYT Correspondents	<i>Class Matters</i> (NY: NY Times Co., 2005) & <i>Canvas</i> link
Heckman, James J.	<i>Giving Kids a Fair Chance</i> (Cambridge: MIT Press)
Wilson, WJ and R Taub	<i>There Goes the Neighborhood</i> (NY: Vintage, 2006)

### **Other Course Notes:**

**Soc 130 is Green. Soc 130 uses the web and other e-resources extensively. Lectures are posted to the website in Power Point.**

**Soc 130 has Dynamic Content. We incorporate into the course current events that take place during the semester. These include major activities of the branches of government, newly released policy briefs, guest speakers on campus, and the like. Some assigned readings may change. Students should be aware of updates from class and from the course website.**

Week	Topic	Dates
1	<b>Intro: Social Science, Public Knowledge</b> <i>Goals of the course</i> <i>Policy IQ &amp; The big picture</i> <b>READ:</b> DeParle “Two Classes in America, Divided by ‘I Do’ ” <i>NYT</i> 15 July 2012 <i>NYT Class Matters</i> Chs 3,4 [Ch 1 optional]	[Sep 3,5]
2	<b>New Visions, Old Visions, Different Visions?</b> <i>Why gov’t? Equity vs. Efficiency</i> <i>Welfare state vs. Rugged Individual</i> <i>Case Study: The ObamaCare debate</i> <b>READ:</b> Garfinkel-et al <i>Wealth and Welfare States</i> Ch2 (2010) <i>NYT Class Matters</i> Chs 2,5 Bailey & Danziger “Legacies of the War on Poverty” Ch 1 in <i>Legacies</i> Porter, E “Income Inequality and the Ills Behind it” <i>NYT</i> 29 July 2014 Stiglitz, J “Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%” <i>Vanity Fair</i> May 2011 [online] <b>FOR MORE:</b> Besharov, “Social Welfare Conservatism” AEI Jan 2008 Esping-Anderson G “Towards the Good Society, Once Again” (2002) Mansfield, “Democracy and Greatness” <i>Weekly Standard</i> 11 Dec 2006	[Sep 8,10,12]
3	<b>Nature vs. Nurture – The Debate and its Reframing</b> <i>Environment vs. Heredity</i> <i>Identities: Race &amp; Gender</i> <i>The Culture of Poverty Revisited</i> <b>READ:</b> Pinker, “Why nature & nurture won’t go away” <i>Daedalus</i> (Fall 2004) Morning, A. <i>The Nature of Race</i> , 2011 Chs 1-2 <b>FOR MORE:</b> Massey, D.P. and R Sampson “Moynihan Redux” <i>Annals</i> 2009; 621; 6-27 Morning, A. <i>The Nature of Race</i> , 2011 remainder.	[Sep 15,17,19]
!!September 19 – Walking Tour 1PM		
4	<b>Facing Inequality: Race, Class, Gender</b> <i>Dimensions of Inequality</i> <i>The Wage Gap</i> <i>Case Study: Title IX– Women in Sports</i> <b>READ:</b> <i>NYT Class Matters</i> Ch 9 Jencks, “Does Inequality Matter?” <i>Daedalus</i> 131 (2002): 49–65 US Census, <i>Income, Poverty...: 2012</i> [Report to be issued, Sept 2014], review Gavora, <i>Tilting the Playing Field</i> (Encounter, 2002) Ch 3 Hanson, et al., <i>More than Title IX</i> (Rowman, 2009), Ch 5 <b>FOR MORE:</b> Neckerman, KM and F. Torche. 2007. "Inequality: causes and consequences." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 33:335-357	[Sep 22,24,26]
5	<b>Poverty and the Stratification of Society</b> <i>Sociological Concepts: Stratification and Social Mobility</i> <i>The Distribution of Income; Is it the 1% versus the 99%??</i> <i>Poverty in comparative perspective</i> <b>READ:</b> <i>NYT Class Matters</i> Chs 6-8 O’Conner <i>Poverty Knowledge</i> (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001) Ch 4 Ludwig, J and SE Mayer. 2006. “ Culture’ and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty.” <i>Future of Children</i> 16: 175-196. <b>FOR MORE:</b> Iceland <i>Poverty in America</i> Chs 1-6	[Sep 29 Oct 1,3]

- 6 Education – Redress or Reinforcement?** [Oct 6,8,10]  
*Education and Stratification*  
*Is School Choice Real or a Myth?*  
*Case Study: Head Start’s Legacy for the War on Poverty*  
**READ:** Heckman, *Giving Kids a Fair Chance* (MIT Press) [Heckman essay]  
Gibbs et al “Head Start Origins and Impacts” Ch 2 in *Legacies*  
Long “Supporting Access to Higher Education” Ch 4 in *Legacies*  
**FOR MORE:** Mervis, J, “Giving Children a Head Start Is Possible...” *Science* 333 (19 Aug 2011) 956-7.  
Alexander, K.L., D.R. Entwisle, and L.S. Olson. 2007. "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap." *American Sociological Review* 72:167180.  
Gleason, P., et al (2010). *The Evaluation of Charter School Impacts: Final Report* (NCEE 2010-4029). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Dep. of Ed.
- 7 Race Relations: Affirmative Reaction?** [Oct 15,17]  
*Affirmative Action: Social Science and the Courts*  
*Case Study: “Stop and Frisk”*  
**READ:** Schuck, P “Affirmative Action” Pp 134-169 *Diversity in America* (Harvard, 2003)  
Wise, Tim J. “Defending Affirmative Action: It’s More than About Preferences” in *Affirmative Action: racial preference in black and white* (Routledge, 2005)  
Espenshade T & Radford, AW *No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal*. Ch 9, “Do We Still Need Affirmative Action?”  
**FOR MORE:** Brown University Committee on Slavery and Justice, *Slavery and Justice* (2006)  
Long, M. and M Tienda “Beyond Admissions: Lessons from Texas” *ANNALS* 2010 627: 6-11  
McAdam, D *Freedom Summer* (Oxford), Ch2 & Epilogue
- 8 The Segregated Society** [Oct 20,22, no class 24 ]  
*Segregation amidst Ethnic Diversity*  
*Is it class or race?*  
*Film Night: Film TBA*  
**READ:** Charles, “Theoretical Perspectives on the Dynamics of Racial Residential Segregation,” *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* (Russell Sage, 2006) Ch 2  
Wilson & Taub, *There Goes the Neighborhood* (Vintage, 2006). All  
Sharkey, P “Towards a Durable Urban Policy Agenda” in *Stuck in Place* [online]  
Patillo, M et al “High Stakes Choosing” Ch 8 in *Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools* [online]  
**FOR MORE:** Iceland *Where we live now*  
White & Glick, Ch 7  
Massey et al., *Climbing Mount Laurel* Ch9 “Affordable Housing: Suburban Solutions...”
- 9 Anti-Poverty Policy: Searching for Success** [Oct 27,29,31]  
*The Long Shadow of Welfare Reform?*  
*Never too early*  
*Case Study: Great Recession, Poverty, and New Hope*  
**READ:** Bane, MJ “Poverty Politics and Policy” Ch 13 in Cancian & Danziger *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies* (Russell Sage, 2009)  
Heckman, *Giving Kids a Fair Chance* (MIT Press) [Commentary & rebuttal]  
**FOR MORE:** Howard, *The welfare state nobody knows* Ch 5  
Miller, C and others *New Hope for the Working Poor* [full MDRC policy report]  
Duncan, Huston, Weisner and others *Higher Ground: New Hope and National Policy* Chs 8-9  
Blank, R. *Changing Inequality*, Chs 6-7.

[Nov 3,5,7]

## *A Nation of Immigrants*

## Immigration and Achievement

### Case Study: The Dream Act

**READ:** Huntington, SP *Who Are We?*(Simon and Schuster, 2004) Chs. 1,8

Telles, EE and V Ortiz *Generations of Exclusion* Chs 5,9,11

White & Glick *Achieving Anew* (Russell Sage, 2009) Chs 1,8

*FOR MORE:* White & Glick, Chs 3-4

Kasinitz, et al *Inheriting the City* (Russell Sage, 2008) Ch 11Fix, M (ed) *Immigrants and Welfare*, Ch 1

[Nov 10,12,14]

### *Family and Disadvantage*

Genes &amp; Environment

### Case Study: TBA

READ: Waite, L & Gallagher, M. *The Case for Marriage* (Broadway, 2000), Ch 7 (“Wages..”)

Bares, BA. "Does Gender Matter" *Nature* 442(13July 2006): 133-136.

**FOR MORE:** Weil, "Teaching Boys and Girls Separately" *NYT* 2 Mar 2008

Cherlin, A. *Marriage Go Round*

Chase-Lansdale, et al. (2003). "Mothers' transitions from welfare to work and the well-being of preschoolers and adolescents," *Science*, 299, 1548–52.

[Nov 17,19,21,24]

## *Residential Change, Neighborhood, and Sustainable Urbanism*

### *Challenge of Community: Utopia?*

### *The Media and Public Policy*

**READ:** Murray, C. *Coming Apart* (Crown 2012) Chs 14-15

Rosenfeld, M. "The Rise of Alternative Unions" *Age of Independence* (California, 2007)

Wilson, WJ, "Fragmentation of the Poor Black Family" *More than Just Race* (Norton, 2009)

**FOR MORE:** Murray, *Coming Apart*, Chs 16-17

Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000) Ch 1, 18

Commentary on *Coming Apart* [course website]

Bishop & Cushing "Big Sort" IN R Teixeira Red, Blue, and Purple America : The Future of Election Demographics (e-book)

[Dec 1,3,5]

## *A Diverse Society, America's Future?*

### Conclusion: Social Science and Public Decisions

## !! Fri Dec 5 – Hour Exam

**\*Dec 5 Fri Hour Examination in class**

**\*Dec 15, Mon 4PM Final Paper due**

**Fall term 2014 reading period is 7-11 Dec**

**Fall term 2014 exam period is 12-20 Dec**