Course Description:

This seminar takes a comparative approach to look at social policies across a range of nations across the globe. The course focuses primarily on employment, poverty, and reproductive policies, considering how these policies are related to one another and to maintaining and challenging gendered notions of men’s and women’s roles in society. In addition, the course explores the politics of social policymaking and activism around social policies.

This course is meant to encourage students to consider the intersections of family, economy, and state – the major social institutions in society. At the same time, the course examines the intersections of race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender – examining masculinities as well as femininities – as well as how neoliberal globalization is reshaping social landscapes across the globe. By exploring issues of gender and social policy in a variety of contexts (primarily the United States and Europe, but also Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East), we theorize more clearly about how states address make gendered assumptions and create gendered societies through their policies.

Required Assignments:

Class Participation: As a seminar, this course is based on active involvement of all participants in discussing the topics we cover. You should complete assigned readings before class, and be prepared to take part in a web-based discussion of the readings that pose questions for discussion before each class session (by 48 hours before the class session, in order to give those leading class discussion some time to plan their session). I also expect active participation in the in-class discussions. Participating in the web board will make up 10% of the grade, participating in class will make up another 10% of the grade. The course website is at: "https://spark.oit.umass.edu/". (20% of grade)

Discussion Leading: You will lead or co-lead discussion one class session during the semester. Organizing the class discussion involves developing a list of 5 major questions – based on points and questions raised via the web discussion – for discussion during the class session. Further criteria for discussion leading are listed at the end of this syllabus. (10% of grade)

Short Papers: You will write two short papers responding to the readings. In these 2 page single-spaced papers, you will discuss and critically evaluate one set of the assigned readings for which you have not led discussion. Turn in each review on the date of the class session covering the readings that you evaluate. One review is due during the first half of the semester (by October 31), and the other is due by the end of the semester (by December 12). Further details about short papers are available at the end of this syllabus. (15% of grade each; 30% total)

Course Paper: You will write a course paper that examines some aspect of gender and social policy. This paper can be in the form of either a research paper or a policy analysis. Final paper topics should be discussed with me and decided by October 24. Rough drafts of the paper are due November 21, 10% will be deducted from the final if a draft is not submitted. The final version of the paper is due on December 19. Further details about short papers are available at the end of this syllabus. (Final Paper: 40% of grade)

Grades are assigned in the form of numeric grades and converted at the end of the semester to letter grades. The grading scale for this course is A=>93; A-=90-93; B+=87-90; B=83-87; B-=80-83, C+=77-80, C=<77.
**Required Books** (Texts are available at Food for Thought Books, 106 N. Pleasant, and are on reserve in the W.E.B. DuBois Library):


Other readings made available on the course website: [https://spark.oit.umass.edu](https://spark.oit.umass.edu)

**Accommodation Policy Statement**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

**Graduate School Statement on Academic Honesty**

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of graduate academic life, related in whatever fashion to the University, shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner by graduate students. Apparent and alleged breaches in this policy are covered in the Graduate Student Academic Policy (Sen. Doc. no. to 89-026). A copy of this policy is available in the Ombuds Office, Faculty Senate Office and the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School. See the full text at: [http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm)

Sanctions for acts of dishonesty range from receiving a grade of F on the paper/exam/assignment or in the course, loss of funding, being placed on probation or suspension for a period of time, or being dismissed from the University. All students have the right of appeal through the Academic Honesty Board.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**September 5: Introduction**

Initial meeting to talk about class, and divide up discussion leading responsibilities.

**September 12: Gender & Social Policy -- Theoretical Reflections**

September 19: Gender & Labor Force Participation


*Recommended Readings:*

September 26: Gender & Labor Force Participation, Part II


*Recommended Readings:*
October 3: Work-Family Issues


Recommended Readings:

October 10: Child Care Policy


Recommended Readings:
October 17: Social Welfare Policy, Welfare Restructuring, and Poverty


**Recommended Readings:**

October 24: Single Parenthood


**Recommended Readings:**
October 31: Globalization of Carework


Recommended Readings:

November 7: Reproductive Politics in the U.S.


Recommended Readings

November 14: No Class (Monday Schedule)

November 21: No Class Scheduled (Thanksgiving Break)

ROUGH DRAFT OF PAPER DUE!!!!!!!
November 28: Reproduction and Policy


Recommended Readings

December 5: Gender and Policymaking: States and NGOs


Recommended Reading:
December 12: Gender and Activism: Women's Movements


**Recommended Reading:**

December 19

Final Paper Due
Principles for Seminar Discussion, Adapted from Erik Olin Wright\(^1\):

The following guidelines are intended to facilitate seminar discussions. Some of them may sound obvious, but I believe that they need to be made explicit.

**Preparation for Seminar Discussions:** Above all: *do the reading, and do it carefully.* I expect everyone to have done all of the readings for each class session. Discussions should revolve around the week’s readings, rather than the larger topic or something that one or more students find interesting. In this course, our discussions must *center* on the assigned texts. In addition, always come to the seminar discussion with at least one question – which hopefully you will have also posted on the web board. These questions do not need to be grandiose or profound -- they can deal with issues of clarification, meaning, interpretation, or reflect something you don’t understand. Always enter the discussion with something you’d like to learn from it.

**Comments & Brevity:** Not every comment needs to be earth shattering. Students may feel intimidated in seminars because it seems that the only legitimate comments are those that show complete mastery of the subject matter. Yet, there is no such thing – we will all be bringing a different perspective to these readings, and will have points to make that others have not considered. Every comment that reflects an attempt to engage the material seriously is valuable; indeed, simple questions often turn out to be the most difficult to answer. Comments asking for a clarification of the readings or of previous comments are always appropriate. In addition, comments should be kept short and to the point. It’s always possible to add elaboration as necessary.

**Listening & Equity:** In a good seminar, comments from different participants are linked one to another. A given point is followed up, and the discussion has continuity. In some seminar discussions, however, comments become disconnected, because participants are not listening to each other and reflecting on what is actually being said. We should attempt to maintain continuity in our comments and discussion. While different exposures to the material, different experiences, and different personalities lead to different levels of participation, it should be our collective goal to have as equitable participation as possible. If you feel that you have dominated discussion, try to go 20 minutes without speaking; if you haven’t participated in the discussion, try to ask a question or make a comment.

**Arguments, Competitiveness, Consensus:** Our seminar discussions are meant to expose theoretical debates. We won’t all agree on a given issue. However, arguments and debates must at all times be grounded on respect for the other participants. Aggressiveness and competitiveness are simply not acceptable. While we won’t usually reach consensus, we should pursue “cooperative conflict”: theoretical advance that comes out of constructive but not antagonistic conflict.

**Discussion Leading:** In order for discussions to have continuity, equity, and the other dynamics mentioned above, it is necessary that the discussion leader take a strong role. The discussion leader needs to have the ability to tell someone to hold off a point that doesn’t relate to the current discussion, cut rambling points short, etc. However, seminar participants have the responsibility of letting the leader know when too much monitoring is going on.

**Collective Self-Evaluation:** The success of a seminar is a collective responsibility of all participants. Professors (and discussion leaders) cannot waive magic wands to promote intellectually productive settings. It is essential that we treat the seminar as something under our collective control, and something that can be challenged and transformed. Any problems should be dealt with through open discussions. We can work together to make the seminar exactly what we hope it will be.

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Guidelines for Leading Class Discussion

You will be in charge of leading discussion of the course material for one week of class during the semester, either alone or with another student. You can structure discussion in any number of ways. However, all discussion leaders must aim for equitable participation from class members and provide discussion questions to class members a week in advance. In addition, keep in mind that at the end of each class session, I will take 10 minutes to summarize what we have learned.

Many discussion leaders prefer to begin class by reviewing the required reading for the week. This review should raise specific questions and issues for the week, and relate the material to previous readings and class discussions. This is a fine strategy, but your summary should not take more than 5 minutes. Longer summaries take away from discussion of the material. Your job is not to lecture, but to lead discussion about the material. This discussion will lead to a clearer understanding of the readings, or at least a clearer understanding of the complexity of the readings.

The discussion leader must take a strong role, to ensure that the discussion covers the material, and that there is equity and continuity in the discussion. One of the major concerns in leading discussion is to ensure that the environment is secure enough for people to ask questions and become involved. Discussion leaders should be vigilant about maintaining equitable participation. Be creative in thinking about how to sustain discussion and involve all class members in discussion. I evaluate discussion leading using the following form. Leading discussion makes up 10% of your grade. Another 20% of your grade will reflect your participation in discussion on the web board and in class.

Is the class session organized well?

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<td>Relates material to previous course readings</td>
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<td>Provides internal summaries and transitions</td>
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<td>Maintains continuity in the discussion</td>
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<td>Summarizes and distills main points at end of class</td>
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<td>Paces class session appropriately</td>
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How is the substantive content discussed?

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<td>Presents background information for ideas</td>
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<td>Integrates readings into discussion</td>
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<td>Helps clarifies material/corrects misunderstandings</td>
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Is the discussion leader credible in her/his role? Does s/he present the material well?

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<td>Appears well-prepared</td>
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<td>Understands the material</td>
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<td>Is able to admit insufficient knowledge</td>
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<td>Speaks audibly and clearly</td>
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<td>Communicates enthusiasm</td>
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How is the discussion leader’s rapport with the other class members?

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<td>Recognizes when others are confused</td>
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<td>Encourages equitable participation</td>
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<td>Encourages class members to respond to one another</td>
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<td>Requires class members’ thought and participation</td>
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<td>Responds constructively to class members</td>
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<td>Treats members equitably and respectfully</td>
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<td>Requires respect between class members</td>
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Guidelines for Short Papers

Two short papers responding to materials covered in the readings are required for this course. In these 2-3 page (single-spaced, typed) papers, you will discuss and critically evaluate one set of the assigned readings for which you have not led discussion. You should turn in each review on the date of the class session covering the readings that you evaluate. I expect one review by October 31, and another by December 12.

You may think of these short papers as critical reviews of the material. Although you may either review a book or a group of articles/chapters in your review, reading book reviews in Contemporary Sociology or Gender and Society may give you an idea of how to organize your review. Basically, a critical evaluation of the material should consist of:

- a paragraph summarizing the authors’ main arguments
- a paragraph placing this material within the larger context of the readings we have done
- a critical evaluation of the arguments the author(s) make(s)

You should evaluate the material in terms of the authors’ ability to present well-supported, sound arguments. While you do not need to bring in outside research, you do need to make specific reference to the readings to back up your arguments and points. Your paper should show that you have thought carefully about all of the reading, going beyond pure description to integration and analysis. In my evaluation of these reviews, I will consider writing style and organization (see below), as well as whether you convey an understanding of the material you review and whether your argument and critique of the material is systematic and convincing.

Guidelines for Final Papers

The major requirement for this class is the final course paper. In this paper, you should do systematic research on a topic that relates to gender and social policy. This final paper may be in the form of a policy analysis or it may be a detailed review of a specific literature, a research proposal, or a paper that engages in original research on a topic.

Final paper topics should be discussed with me during office hours, and submitted formally by email, with a preliminary outline for the paper, by October 24. Rough drafts of the paper are due by November 21 (class is cancelled on this date, to give you time to work, and due to Thanksgiving break). No grades will be given these drafts, but 10% will be deducted from the final grade if a draft is not submitted. The final version of the paper is due on December 19. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and between 12-20 pages (length is negotiable). The paper makes up 40% of your final grade. A good paper has:

- A clear introduction, which provides a persuasive argument about the importance and relevance of the paper
- A clear and original argument, which draws from a review of the relevant literature. Show that you understand how your argument fits within the scholarship that already exists, and rely upon at least 12 sources.
- Methodological appropriateness, if you propose or actually do research for the paper.
- A conclusion that summarizes your findings and makes explicit the implications of your research, including policy recommendations when appropriate.
- Effective writing and organization, including transitions between paragraphs and sections, and footnotes for any information that is not crucial for your argument.

Finally, revise thoroughly. Revision is the difference between an “A” and a “B” paper. Two papers can be well conceptualized, theoretically sophisticated, and methodologically well executed, and yet if the first was never revised, it will be noticeably inferior to the second. Try to finish the paper at least two weeks before it is due. Then reorganize your argument, clear up fuzzy concepts, recheck your references, and fix spelling and grammatical errors. **You should revise your paper at least 3 times before submitting it for this course.**
Writing Tips for Short and Final Papers

In terms of writing style, writing a good paper always requires revision – revision helps you organize your thoughts effectively and convey your arguments with brevity and clarity. It is important that your paper is clearly organized, and includes roadmaps describing the organization of the paper, as well as transition sentences between sections. Headings are useful.

Use citations (noting the author and year of a piece in parentheses) and quotations (noting author, year, and page number of the quotation) to support or illustrate your points. Be sure all direct quotations include quote marks and page numbers and do not use overly long quotations or too many quotations (if you think you may be using too many, you probably are). Be certain to list full references to any sources you cite at the end of the paper.

Use the smallest number of words, and most concrete words possible, to make your points. Avoid “throat-clearing” (example: “it is the opinion of this author that…”). Use the active voice. It is also fine to write in the first person, but avoid starting sentences with qualifiers like “I believe” or “I think.”

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2 Some of these guidelines are adapted from writing guidelines developed by Katie McDermott.