Comparative Family Policy
Instructor: Steven K. Wisensale, PhD
University of Connecticut, USA
Department of Human Development and Family Studies
e-mail: steven.wisensale@uconn.edu
web: http://www.familystudies.uconn.edu/faculty/wisensale.html
Visiting Fulbright Professor- Charles Univ. - Prague

Course Objectives:

This course has four major objectives. First, to acquire an understanding of public policy in general and family policy in particular. How is family policy defined and what are its primary components? Second, What are the major characteristics of family policy in the Czech Republic today compared to the pre-1989 era? Three, how does Czech family policy differ from other former Eastern block countries and members of the European Union? And fourth, what does the future hold for family policy in the Czech Republic?

Requirements and Expectations:

Students will be expected to attend class regularly, complete assigned readings, and participate in class discussions as well as question and answer sessions. A portion of each class will be devoted to a traditional lecture but a sufficient amount of time will be reserved for student participation.

Students will be expected to present oral reports on various topics and issues as the course progresses. A final exam will be completed at the conclusion of the course.

Reading materials will consist of journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and designated web sites. All readings are available through the internet. Some have been placed on a special WebCT web site and are identified on the syllabus in bold type as WebCT Reading. Please refer to the last page of this syllabus for instructions on how to access these WebCT Readings.

The instructor will make himself available to students before and after class or through scheduled appointments.

Class Sessions, Course Topics and Assigned Readings

February 21 - Introduction

The first class session will be used to introduce the course as well as provide some background information about the instructor, including his teaching and research interests. Students will be asked to share their academic interests, career goals, and reasons for enrolling in the course.
February 28 - Topic 1 - Understanding Public Policy, Defining Family Policy.

**Purpose:** To introduce students to public policy as a discipline and then establish an understanding of the sub-discipline- family policy.


**Suggested reading:** Visit the web site of the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management at [http://www.appam.org/services/students/index.asp](http://www.appam.org/services/students/index.asp) and read the first two sections - "Public Policy as an Academic Field" and "Careers in Public Policy." These readings will provide background on the training and careers of policy analysts in the United States.

March 7 – No class meeting

March 14 -Topic 2 - Creating a Framework for Comparing Family Policies

**Purpose:** To provide key sources for gathering information on comparative family policy.


March 21 -Topic 3 - Resources and Tools for Comparing Family Policies

**Purpose:** To provide key sources for gathering information on comparative family policy.

**Required readings:** Visit each of the web sites below. Specific directions for navigating the sites will be provided prior to the class meeting.

- Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth, and Family [http://www.childpolicyintl.org](http://www.childpolicyintl.org)
March 28 - Topic 4 - Changing Demographics, Changing Family Trends

Purpose: To identify major family trends worldwide and those in the Czech Republic in particular.


It is also suggested that you visit the web sites below.

April 4 - Topic 5 - Population Policy and Reproductive Issues

Purpose: To review population policies in Europe with a particular focus on changes after 1989 in the Czech Republic.


April 11 - Topic 6 - The Economic Well-being of Children and Families

Purpose: To explore policies designed to prevent poverty in families.


April 18 - Topic 7 - The Care and Support of Children

Purpose: To compare child-care and early education policies in the Czech Republic to other European countries. How do policies differ before and after 1989?


April 25 - Topic 8 - Work, Family, and Gender Equity

Purpose: To analyze the ongoing conflict between work and family life in the Czech Republic and other industrialized nations.


May 2 - Topic 9 - Parental Leave Policy

Purpose: To compare parental leave policy in the Czech Republic with leave policies in other countries.


Visit the web site below. Specific directions on navigating the site will be provided prior to the class meeting. [http://www.childpolicyintl.org/](http://www.childpolicyintl.org/)

May 9 - Topic 10 - Caring for the Elderly: What Role for Families?

Purpose: To examine the challenges ahead for families and policymakers as more industrialized societies continue to age.


May 16 - Topic 11 - Family Policy Worldwide, in the EU and in the Czech Republic

Purpose: The role of the European Union in shaping Czech family policy


Final Questions: What Have We Learned? What is the future for the family and what role should public policy play in shaping its future.
How to access WebCT Readings

1. Go to http://www.Webct.uconn.edu
2. Click on green box on right that reads “Go to WebCT log in.”
3. If you get a “security certificate,” click on “Yes.”
4. When you get the screen with “Web-Enabled Courses,” type in each box the 8 digit code that is displayed here in bold type.
   Net ID  stw91013
   Password  stw91013
5. When you come to the page, “my WebCT Steven Wisensale,” see “Courses” in upper left corner and then click on “HDFS-274 Public Policy and…….” below.
6. You will come to a page labeled “Two Courses.” Please read the directions.
7. Click on the “Comparative Family Policy” icon on the left.
8. All WebCT readings (some are required and some are suggested) are listed in the same order as they appear on the course syllabus.
9. To learn more about my university in the U.S., click on the Uconn icon in the center of the page.
10. All WebCT readings are in pdf format. You will need Adobe Reader if it is not on your computer. Go to http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html for a free download.