PUBP 861 CULTURE AND SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS  
SPRING 2012   Tuesday 7:20-10:00 pm   FH 324  
Prof. Jack Goldstone  
jgoldsto@gmu.edu  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 – 5:00pm  
Office location: FH 607  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  

PUBP 861 is the second course for the Culture and Society concentration, and it is designed to complement PUBP 860 which is primarily a theory course. This half of the sequence has a greater emphasis on social policy applications, analysis, and research, although the course reviews some theoretical materials important for understanding the origins of and debates over various social policies. The course has an emphasis on social policies in the following general areas: poverty and welfare; race and civil rights; education; crime and social control; and the family including divorce and child development. Other topics can be covered, depending on interests of students, including health policies, inequality, and immigration policy.  

REQUIREMENTS  

Students are expected to do the required readings and be prepared to discuss them in class. In addition, students will take the lead in summarizing and discussing the required readings for two of the weeks starting with Week 4. There will also be a mid-term examination (take-home) and a research paper on an appropriate social/cultural policy issue. Grades are weighted as follows: presentations and general class discussion 20%; midterm 30%; research paper 50%. In lieu of readings on another topic in Week 15, students can decide instead to make a brief presentation on their research paper (not necessarily in final form).  

REQUIRED READINGS  

Readings will be available on-line, either via Kindle books (minimal purchase price) or through GMU on-line library at http://library.gmu.edu/phpzone/ej.php  

WEEK 1 JAN 24: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE  
Overview of the course; assignment of readings; discussion of optional topic in Week 15.  

Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom (40th anniversary edition).  

WEEK 2 JAN 31: SOCIAL THEORY I  
Approaches to understanding poverty and inequality in modern capitalist societies  

Thorstein Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class (any edition, text only notes optional).  
Robert H. Frank, Falling Behind (2007)
WEEK 3  FEB 7: SOCIAL THEORY II


NOTE: We will discuss this in the first part of Week 4, along with the readings for that week.

We have NO CLASS this week; in lieu of class you are required to watch a video of President Obama’s State of the Union broadcast.

WEEK 4  FEB 14: WELFARE POLICY I: THE WAR ON POVERTY

NOTE: Not available via Kindle – buy from $15.88 used on Amazon.com  

WEEK 5  FEB 21: WELFARE POLICY II: TRENDS IN INEQUALITY


OECD. 2011. *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Growing.*  
Summary. On-line at:  
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/12/49170449.pdf

WEEK 6  FEB 28: WELFARE POLICY III: WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT


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WEEK 7 MAR 6: INEQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY


WEEK 8 MAR 13: SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS

WEEK 9 MAR 20: RACE AND POVERTY*

William Julius Wilson, 2011. *Afterword to new edition of The Truly Disadvantaged*

Lawrence Bobo, 2011. *Somewhere between Jim Crow & Post-Racialism* in *Daedalus*

WEEK 10 MAR 27: IMMIGRATION I: SOURCES AND CAUSES


WEEK 11 APR 3: IMMIGRATION II: CONTROL AND OUTCOMES


WEEK 12 APR 10: HEALTH POLICY AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Readings to be determined

WEEK 13 APR 17: EDUCATION I – A SOLUTION OR CAUSE OF INEQUALITY?

Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane. 2011 (eds.), *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances* (Russell Sage and Spencer). Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17

Available as an ebook on the Russell Sage Foundation website: 
https://www.russellsage.org/publications/whither-opportunity
WEEK 14 APR 24: EDUCATION II – POLICIES AND OUTCOMES

Duncan and Murnane, Chapters 20, 23, 24, 25


WEEK 15 MAY 1: Open Topic, to be determined

FINAL TERM PAPER DUE MAY 15th

Academic Accommodation for a Disability
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

SPP Policy on Plagiarism
The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.
The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes.

Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

(http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html)