



O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs

SPEA-V 450/550: SOCIAL POLICY
FALL 2021

Professor Silva
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Tuesday/Thursday, 11:30am-12:45pm
SPEA 278

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:00pm
SPEA 410J

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This is an interdisciplinary course that will introduce students to basic concepts in economics, political science, and sociology that are relevant to the study of social problems and the programs designed to remedy them. We begin by examining recent trends in inequality and social mobility, debates about why inequality persists, and the fundamental question of why we should care. After learning about the historical roots of the American welfare state, we examine major institutions as sites in the production and reproduction of inequality: families, neighborhoods, schools, labor markets, and the criminal justice system. For each major institution, we will trace how social policy has developed and evaluate its current effectiveness. Students will participate in writing policy briefs, designing qualitative research proposals, working in teams to create presentations, and proposing evidence-based policies to address gaps in the current social safety net. Students will also take the lead in developing meaningful social policy reform.

We are currently living through a global pandemic that has unveiled and exacerbated stark inequalities across the United States. As families across the US struggle to keep a roof over their heads, feed their children, juggle work and care obligations, and maintain physical and mental health, it is crucially important that we analyze, debate, and evaluate the social programs that have been designed to improve people's lives. Recent national uprisings against injustice have put a spotlight on racism, poverty, sexism, and other forms of discrimination that stymie people's wellbeing, safety, and opportunity. In this historic moment, this course will provide you with the skills and tools that are necessary to understand, evaluate, and implement social policies designed to promote social equality – where they succeed and where they fall short.

Despite our challenging times, I look forward to meaningful, deep discussions with you and your peers. I expect students to take responsibility for completing assignments, asking questions, challenging taken-for-granted ideas, and creating classroom activities. I will take responsibility for preparing lectures, designing activities, facilitating discussion, and providing timely feedback on your work. I always welcome your questions, concerns, and comments. I will ask you to do your best to work toward these goals: Be flexible, embrace uncertainty, communicate openly, and support each other.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify and debate the key drivers of social inequality in the US.
2. Describe the basic contours of American social policy in a historical and comparative context.
3. Build a learning community based on mutual respect, curiosity, active engagement, and integrity.
4. Effectively communicate policy ideas and solutions to different audiences, including professionals in the nonprofit/policy-making world and the general public.
5. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the specific obstacles and opportunities for change as it relates to a social policy important to them.

O'Neill School expectations of civility and professional conduct¹

The O'Neill School takes matters of honesty and integrity seriously because O'Neill is the training ground for future leaders in government, civic organizations, health organizations, and other institutions charged with providing resources for the public, and for members of society who are vulnerable and who are lacking in power and status. Precisely because O'Neill graduates tend to rise to positions of power and responsibility, it is critical that the lessons of honesty and integrity are learned early.

O'Neill requires that all members of its community – students, faculty, and staff – treat others with an attitude of mutual respect both in the classroom and during all academic and nonacademic activities outside the classroom. A student is expected to show respect through behavior that promotes conditions in which all students can learn without interruption or distraction. These behaviors foster an appropriate atmosphere inside and outside the classroom:

- Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be prepared for class.
- Students must be punctual in their arrival to class and be present and attentive for the duration of the class. Eating, sleeping, reading the newspaper, doing work for another class, wandering in and out of the classroom, and packing up or leaving class early are not civil or professional behaviors.

¹ These expectations are excerpted from the O'Neill School Honor Code which can be found here: https://oneill.indiana.edu/doc/undergraduate/ugrd_student_honorcode.pdf

- Students must abide by the course policy regarding use of electronic devices in the classroom.
- Students must responsibly participate in class activities and during team meetings.
- Students must address faculty members, other students, and others appropriately and with respect, whether in person, in writing, or in electronic communications.
- Students must show tolerance and respect for diverse nationalities, religions, races, sexual orientations, and physical abilities.
- Students must not destroy or deface classroom property nor leave litter in the classroom.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to adhere to the Indiana University guidelines regarding academic standards and behavior. I expect that all work you turn in will be your own. If you synthesize or rely on other people's ideas or words to make your argument, you must cite them. Please take a moment to review your responsibilities here: <http://www.iu.edu/~code/>.

Note Selling: Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/study guides to their classmates. Selling the instructor's notes/study guides in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct (violation of course rules). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

Online Course Materials: The faculty member teaching this course holds the exclusive right to distribute, modify, post, and reproduce course materials, including all written materials, study guides, lectures, assignments, exercises, and exams. While you are permitted to take notes on the online materials and lectures posted for this course for your personal use, you are not permitted to re-post in another forum, distribute, or reproduce content from this course without the express written permission of the faculty member. Any violation of this course rule will be reported to the appropriate university offices and officials, including to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct.

Course Readings

There is one required book for this course:

Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2014. *Trapped in America's Social Safety Net: One Family's Struggle*. University of Chicago Press.

We will also read original journal articles, books on IUCAT, and policy briefs, watch films, and listen to podcasts, which are available as PDFs or links through Canvas.

Course Policies

If you face any problems completing your work (whether due to family emergencies, financial issues, technology failures, illness, etc.), please talk to me and we will make reasonable arrangements. In the case of unexcused late work, I will deduct one third of a grade each day from your total grade for that assignment.

Assignments and Grading

Major assignments for this course will include:

- Participation in classroom discussions and debates (10%)
- Weekly Canvas Discussions (20%)
- Leading class in small groups (20%)
- Policy Brief (15%)
- Qualitative Interview and Op ed/Podcast (15%)
- Final Multi-Media Policy Presentation (20%)

Participation (10%): You are expected to come to class on time having read and thought carefully about the assigned readings. You are also expected to participate actively in classroom activities. Taking notes on the reading is an excellent way to be prepared for class discussion.

Weekly Canvas Discussions (20%): To demonstrate your ability to think critically and apply what we learn to the world around you, you will be responsible for **weekly posts**. For ten modules indicated on the syllabus, I will ask students **to post a memo on Canvas that describes your reaction to the lecture and readings** before our Thursday class time. These memos should be about 300 words. Your response should not be a boring summary, but should instead aim to bring new knowledge or a critical perspective to the conversation. What do you find interesting? Were you convinced, confused, or skeptical? You could, for example, connect what you watched to current political platforms, what is happening in the Bloomington community, or a salient personal experience. You can also express disagreement or criticism of what you read: it is very important to learn how to respectfully yet convincingly debate policy issues! Note: I love reading these memos – they inspire me before class and let me feel connected to you!

Leading Class Group Presentation (20%): In groups of four to five students, you will take responsibility for planning and organizing a presentation, learning activity, and discussion questions for one week of the class. Your challenge is to create a presentation that draws on the course readings and lectures in an informative and engaging way. You must then pitch a social policy change that builds off the course materials with your own research. You might want to make power point slides to provide an overview of the readings, create discussion and/or debate questions for the class, or share a relevant video or news story to spark discussion. Your presentation should last about 45 minutes. Topics requiring a student group-led presentation are marked with an ** You can sign up here.

Policy Brief: (15%): A policy brief is a document that advocates for choosing a particular course of action in a current relevant policy debate. It should convince readers that a current social problem is urgent, make a case for action, and provide a strong rationale for adopting the proposal strategy for change. A brief should be focused, succinct, accessible to non-academics, evidence-based, and practical. References to scholarly sources are required. Specific actions to be undertaken should be emphasized. For this assignment, you may work in pairs or by yourself to produce a two-page, single-spaced policy brief on a social inequality/social safety net issue of your choosing.² **Due October 7th by 11:59 pm on Canvas.**

Qualitative Interview and Op Ed OR Podcast (15%): Think tanks and advocacy groups are increasingly turning to qualitative research such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and ethnographic observation to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of inequality and injustice, as well as hidden barriers to social change. For this assignment, students will interview a person outside of class about their experiences and connect what they say to topics covered in class, contributing to a much richer understanding of inequality and social policy. For example, a student interested in the rising costs of college might interview a young adult in the community about their struggle to pay their tuition while taking a full course load. Or, a student interested in inequality and family life could interview a working mom about her struggles to attend school conferences or make healthy meals for her kids. Students will present their results in a podcast OR op ed format, where they explain whom they interviewed, how this person's story reveals important insights into inequality and social programs, and what should be done in terms of specific policy changes. This is a chance to be provocative, opinionated, and independent! **Due November 12th by 11:59 pm.**

Final Multi-Media Group Project (20%): For this final project, students will work in small groups of their choosing to create a policy platform for a candidate of their choice (local, regional, national, etc.). Imagine that your team has been hired to shape the policy of the next four years on a salient issue. For example, perhaps you have been asked to address: early childhood education, health disparities among children, or the cost of higher education. In this multi-media project, students will do independent research to define the scope of the problem, propose an original policy solution that is backed by existing evidence, and demonstrate why this policy (and not others) is the right path. Some ideas include: interviewing an expert on the topic and incorporating it into your video; having a debate between team members to demonstrate the complexity of the issue; bringing in powerful vignettes; and presenting data in a visually appealing and powerful way. Presentations are due on our **scheduled final day**, and we will use the last week of ideas to refine, polish, and share.

Grade Conversion

Assignments will be graded through Canvas using a point system. The letter grades will be converted as follows:

A+ 98.0% B+ 87.0% C+ 77% D+ 67.0% F 0.0%

² <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blog.lrei.org/dist/c/104/files/2009/11/PolicyBrief-described.pdf>

A 93.0%	B 83.0%	C 73%	D 63%
A- 90.0%	B- 80.0%	C- 70%	D- 60%

The letter grade conversion above also applies to course grades. The instructor will round up ONLY if you are within .5% of the next letter grade.

Course Schedule

****Please note that the schedule is subject to limited change in the event of extenuating circumstances.****

Module 1: Welcome, introductions, course policies

August 24 – August 26

Materials:

- Syllabus!
- Ray and Gibbons, “Why are states banning critical race theory?”
- Dougherty, “Critical Race Theory as Metaphysics”

Module 2: The Politics of the Welfare State

August 31 – September 2

Materials:

- Ghilarducci, “The Welfare State: A Terrible Name for an Essential System”
- Hacker, “Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States”
- Coates, “The Case for Reparations”
- Rashidi, “We need safety net policies that make work pay”

***Weekly Memo #1 due before class on Thursday, September 2nd.**

Module 3: Inequality and Opportunity**

September 7 – September 9

- Reich, Robert, “Inequality for All” video

- Mankiw, N. Gregory. 2013. “Defending the One Percent.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27 (3): 21-34.

*Weekly Memo #2 due before class on Thursday, September 9th.

Module 4: Leveling the Playing Field?*

September 14 – September 16

- Kearney and Modstad, “Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a Policy Response to Current Challenges”
- Wessel, “Who are the rich and how might we tax them more”
- Tach and Halpern-Meekin, “Tax Code Knowledge and Behavioral Responses Among EITC Recipients: Policy Insights from Qualitative Data”
- Sykes et al, “Dignity and dreams: What the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) means to low-income families.” *American Sociological Review* 80: 243-26.

*Weekly Memo #3 due before class on Thursday, September 16th.

Module 5: Money and Morals*

September 21 – September 23

- Hays, “Money and Morality” and “Promoting Family Values”
- Sherman, ““A very expensive ordinary life”: consumption, symbolic boundaries and moral legitimacy among New York elites”
- Doar, “TANF Has Been a Success - Let's Make it Better”

*Weekly Memo #4 due before class on Thursday, September 23rd.

Module 6: Trapped in America’s Social Safety Net*

September 28 – September 30

- Campbell, “Trapped”

*Weekly Memo #5 due before class on Thursday, September 30th.

Module 7: Inequality in the Global Pandemic*

October 5 – October 7

- Silva et al, “What if something happens? A Qualitative study of the Hopes and Anxieties of the American Middle Class Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic”
- Calarco et al., “‘Let’s Not Pretend It’s Fun’: How COVID-19-Related School and Childcare Closures are Damaging Mothers’ Well-Being”
- Dickinson et. al, “Structural Racism and the COVID-19 Experience in the United States”
- NPR, “Black Doctors Tackle Vaccine Hesitancy”

*Weekly Memo #6 due before class on Thursday, October 7th.

***Policy brief due October 7th by 11:59 pm on Canvas.

Module 8: Exploring Mixed Methods Research in Social Policy

October 12 – October 14

- Mathur and Silva, *American Family Diaries*, “Letter from the editors,” as well as chapters by Wilcox and Eberstadt

*No weekly memo this week!

Module 9: Work and Workers**

October 19 – October 21

- Ehrenreich, “Serving in Florida” and “Evaluation”
- Bertrand and Mullainathan, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal?"
- Rivera, “Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms”
- Cha and Weeden, “Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages”

*Weekly Memo #7 due before class on Thursday, October 21st.

Module 10: Mating and Marrying**

October 26 - October 28

- Randles and Avishai, “Saving Marriage Culture ‘One Marriage at a Time’: Relationship Education and the Reinstitutionalization of Marriage in an Era of Individualism”
- Sawhill, “Reducing poverty by cutting unplanned births”
- Alvare, “Are LARCs the Solution to Nonmarital Childbearing?”
- Shreffler et al, “Surgical Sterilization, Regret, and Race: Contemporary Patterns”

*Weekly Memo #8 due before class on Thursday, October 28th.

Module 11: Fragile Families**

November 2 – November 4

- McLanahan, “Fragile Families and the Reproduction of Poverty”
- Edin and Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep* (IUCAT)
- Garfinkel et al, “Fragile Families in the American Welfare State”
- Williams, “Social and Behavioral Consequences of Toxic Stress”

*Weekly Memo #9 due before class on Thursday, November 4th.

Module 12: Neighborhoods and Communities**

November 9 – November 11

- Dinzey-Flores, “Gated communities for the rich and the poor”
- Rosen et al, “Racial Discrimination in Housing: How Landlords Use Algorithms and Home Visits to Screen Tenants” (forthcoming)
- Clair, “Being a Disadvantaged Criminal Defendant: Mistrust and Resistance in Attorney-Client Interactions”
- Owens, “Inequality in Children’s Contexts: Income Segregation of Households with and without Children”

*Weekly Memo #10 due before class on Thursday, November 11th.

*****Qualitative Interview Due November 12th by 11:59 pm.**

Module 13: Schools – Reproducing or Combating Inequality?***

November 16 – November 18

- Reardon, “Inequality and Academic Achievement”
- Sanchez, “Pre-K: Decades Worth Of Studies, One Strong Message”
- Hymowitz, “Universal Pre-School Won’t Solve Inequality”
- Calarco, “I Need Help!”

Module 14: The Promise and Perils of Higher Education**

November 30 – December 2

- Silva and Snellman, “Salvation or Safety Net?”

- Cottom, “The Coded Language of For-Profit Colleges”
- Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*
- Wade, “Doctoring Diversity”
- Nguyen, “Degreeless in Debt”

Module 15: Your policy ideas!

December 7 - December 9

We will use this last week to discuss and share your policy presentations

Additional Information and Resources for Students

Counseling and Psychological Services

For information about services offered to students by CAPS:

<http://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/index.shtml>.

Religious Observation

In accordance with the Office of the Dean of Faculties, any student who wishes to receive an excused absence from class must submit a request form available from the Dean of Faculties for each day to be absent. This form must be presented to the course instructor by the end of the second week of this semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day. The instructor will fill in the bottom section of the form and then return the original to the student. Information about the policy on religious observation can be found at the following website: <https://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-59-accommodation-religious-observances/index.html>.

Disability Services for Students

Securing accommodations for a student with disabilities is a responsibility shared by the student, the instructor and the DSS Office. For information about support services or accommodations available to students with disabilities, and for the procedures to be followed by students and instructors: <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/student-support/disability-services/index.html>.

Sexual Harassment

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Title IX and our own Sexual Misconduct policy prohibit sexual misconduct. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help.

If you are seeking help and would like to talk to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with:

- i. The Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS) at 812-855-8900
- ii. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 812-855-5711
- iii. Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at 812-856-2469
- iv. IU Health Center at 812-855-4011

For more information about available resources:

<http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html>. It is also important to know that federal regulations and University policy require me to promptly convey any information about potential sexual misconduct known to me to our campus' Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, they will work with a small number of others on campus to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available to the student who may have been harmed. Protecting a student's privacy is of utmost concern, and all involved will only share information with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html> to learn more.

Commitment to Diversity: Find your home and community at IU

Asian Culture Center

Address: 807 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-856-5361

Email: acc@indiana.edu

Website: <https://asianresource.indiana.edu/index.html>

First Nations Educational & Cultural Center

Address: 712 E 8th St., Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-855-4814

Email: fnecc@indiana.edu

Website: <https://firstnations.indiana.edu/contact/index.html>

LGBTQ+ Culture Center

Address: 705 E 7th St., Bloomington, Indiana 47408

Phone: 812-855-4252

Email: glbtserv@indiana.edu

Website: <https://lgbtq.indiana.edu/contact/index.html>

La Casa Latino Culture Center

Address: 715 E 7th St., Bloomington IN, 47408

Phone: 812-855-0174

Email: lacasa@indiana.edu

Website: <https://lacasa.indiana.edu/>

Neal Marshall Black Culture Center

Address: 275 N Jordan Ave Bloomington, Indiana 47405

Phone: 812-855-9271

Email: nmgrad@indiana.edu

Website: <https://blackculture.indiana.edu/index.html>