

HDFS 535: A Family Perspective on Policymaking

Sarah Halpern-Meekin
Tuesday/Thursday 11-12:15
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Course description

Families are a fundamental institution in society and have changed rapidly over the past several decades, yet their role in policy is often overlooked. Students in this course will learn the family perspective on policymaking, how such an approach can influence the policy process, and about the concerns and limitations of using such an approach.

The course emphasizes learning by doing and through discussion, therefore I expect we will all to come to class prepared and engaged. Although I will do some lecturing in class, we will also have small group discussions and activities during most classes; students' active participation in these will contribute to a successful class dynamic.

The nature of the subjects we will be discussing in this class can be both intellectual and personal. When making comments in class, please be mindful of the feelings and previous experiences of your classmates. I expect, and in fact hope, that you will disagree with one another, but I also expect that you will always be respectful in doing so.

Teaching Assistants

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Course policies

Class is a time for me to clarify and offer new course information and for you to engage in discussion with your classmates. Therefore, please do not use cell phones during class – this includes sending or checking texts; cell phones should not be out during class to avoid any temptations.

Readings are either available on the course website or by following the links in the syllabus. For the readings from the Bogenschneider text, please note that the tables and figures referenced in each chapter are shown at the end of the chapter (so you'll need to flip ahead to see them—a small price to pay for not having to buy a textbook, I hope). If you are having any trouble accessing these materials, please let me know immediately. If a link isn't working, try putting the title of the piece in a search engine to locate it that way.

Students with disabilities should discuss necessary accommodations with me as soon as possible.

If you would like to dispute a grade on a paper or assignment, write a one-page memo stating your case. Your case for a grade change should be based on the merits of your work alone, not on whether you think it is better than someone else's assignment in the class. You have one week from the day assignments are returned to submit a grade change memo to me. Submitting a grade-change memo is not a guarantee of receiving a higher grade.

Please make use of my office hours to discuss any difficulties you are having with the class material or assignments. Don't wait until just before the quizzes or due dates! You do not need to make an appointment or email me beforehand to come to my office hours – just drop by. Use email often and wisely. Please check the syllabus and course website first for the answer to your question before emailing me. Please allow for at least a day for me to respond (no last minute requests!).

Students who cheat or attempt to cheat will either receive a zero score for that quiz or assignment or a failing grade for the course. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the dean so that she may decide whether further disciplinary action is warranted. **Using ideas or words taken from another source and not properly citing them is cheating; any words that are not your own should appear in quotation marks, and a citation, including a page number, must be provided.** Unfortunately, I catch students plagiarizing each semester, which is very unpleasant for me and for them. If you are at all unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, ask me, ask a librarian (they're happy to help!), and see: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html> Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with these rules in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct.

Course assignments

Assignment	Percentage of final grade	Due dates
5 online quizzes	5 x 5% = 25%	9/19-21, 10/10-12, 10/31-11/2, 11/21-23, 12/5-7
In-class discussion activities	25%	Weekly (due in class)
Write-up of policy meetings*	10%	Recommended due date: 11/5 Final due date: 12/10
Assessments of Family Impact Analyses*	2%	11/12
Family impact paper*	20%	11/26
Careers in policy paper*	2%	12/3
Presentation on family impact analysis <u>or</u> policy meeting	2% based on classmates' grades + 4% based on TA/my grading = 6%	12/5 & 12/12

Letter to newspaper editor or to government official *	10%	December 17, 2:45pm
Extra credit response papers*	5%	Weekly – Tuesdays

* These assignments are to be turned in via the dropbox on the course website. It is your responsibility to make sure the paper is in the dropbox by the deadline; if you are experiencing any issues with the dropbox, email me your paper as this will show that you had completed the assignment on time. In addition, these assignments are to be in the following format: Word documents (.doc or .docx), Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1" margins. **Assignments must be in the dropbox by 11am to receive full credit; late assignments will be docked one-third of a grade per day.**

Quizzes

- To be completed online
- Will cover material from readings and class
- There aren't "trick" questions – the purpose of the quizzes is for you and I to make sure you are completing and understanding the material
- Will include multiple choice questions, true/false questions, and short answer questions
- Quizzes will be available from Thursdays at 12:15 p.m. until Saturdays at 11:59 a.m.
- Make sure you are able to take the quizzes at some point during each quiz period; no make-ups are available.

Discussion assignments

- To be completed in class as part of small group discussions – questions/prompts will be provided in class and answers/descriptions of the group's discussion need to be turned in by the end of class
- You must be present to get credit
- I will drop your lowest three grades.
- Assignments are graded zero (not completed/turned in or of such low quality that credit cannot be given), check minus, check, check plus. See the discussion assignment grading rubric on the course website for further information.

Policy meetings paper (assignment created by Karen Bogenschneider)

- Attend two meetings in which policy issues are being discussed. One of the meetings must be a hearing of the state legislature and the other can be another legislative hearing or a government meeting (e.g., county board of supervisors, city council, school board meeting), judicial proceedings (i.e., Supreme Court trial), advocacy meeting (e.g., Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Children's Trust Fund, etc.), political forum (e.g., League of Women Voter's debate, political party caucus, candidate or politician's speech), or nonprofit organization (i.e., child care center board meeting, church or religious council meeting).
- To locate state legislature meetings, look at the "Legislative Activity" section of the state legislature's website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. To find

other types of meetings, you can search online, including using the search tool at <http://www.thedailypage.com/theguide/> or <http://www.cityofmadison.com/citycalendar/>; you can also email/call or look at the website of the organization whose meeting you are interested in attending.

- Write a 3-5-page paper that includes the names of both meetings as well as the place, date, number and types of people in attendance, and the total time you attended.
- For one of the meetings, summarize:
 - What happened, how decisions were made or will be made, and what you learned about the policymaking process;
 - The implications for family policy;
 - What you learned from the experience (drawing on class readings and your own experiences).
 - You may compare and contrast the two meetings you attended if this makes sense/is helpful in drawing out what is notable.
- The recommended due date for this assignment is 11/5. Because the end of the semester is a busy time, I strongly recommend that you turn in the assignment then. However, if a meeting you are particularly interested in attending is not happening in time for you to meet that deadline, you will have until 12/10 to turn in the assignment.
 - Plan ahead so that you can find and attend meetings that interest you, rather than rushing to attend whatever is happening at the end of the semester.

Assessment of family impact analyses

- During Week Eleven of class, you will read three examples of family impact analyses. Write a one-paragraph assessment of each Family Impact Analysis that you read (for a total of three paragraphs). Your assessments should address:
 - What points does the author make that are most insightful/important?
 - What points may have been missed?
 - Are there issues that are not adequately accounted for when using the family impact approach in this case?

Family impact paper

- Choose an area of policy—could be at the federal, state, local, or organizational level—as the focus of this 5-7-page paper. The area of policy can be one we have discussed in class, but doesn't have to be. If it is an area we have discussed in class, your paper must offer more than a reiteration of information from class.
- Using the family impact principles (described in the Bogenschneider book; for more information, see: http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fi_handbook_0712.pdf), describe the expected impact (positive and/or negative) of the policy on families; include information about whether these impacts seem to be intended versus unintended consequences (i.e., was this an outcome the policymakers were aiming for with this policy?). Be sure to support your contentions with evidence and logic.
- Make a set of recommendations for how policy in this area could be improved or should be made in the future. This should include information about the likelihood

of your suggestions being implemented (i.e., speak to Kingdon's policy windows idea).

- Make use of the paper checklist on the course website to be sure your paper meets class standards.

Careers in policy paper

- Read about the career option(s) that is most interesting/appealing to you in Chapter 14, and do one of the following:
 - (1) interview someone who works in that field and write a brief report about what you learned and what it made you think about potentially pursuing that career option, or
 - (2) investigate the particularities of the chosen field (for example, you could: find job listings in the field to learn what sorts of opportunities exist out there and what the requirements are for obtaining such positions; learn more about the sorts of institutions in which those in the profession work (how are the organizations set up, what sorts of opportunities for career advancement are there, etc.)), then write a brief report about what you learned and what it made you think about potentially pursuing that career option.
- Reports should be approximately 2 pages in length. Be sure to cite all sources you use. Successful papers will reflect on the profession's potential for incorporating a family impact perspective and/or influencing family policy.

Presentation on family impact paper or policy meetings

- You can choose to present either on your family impact paper or on the policy meetings you attended.
 - Your presentation should inform your classmates of what was most important and most interesting from what you learned; explain connections to course material; and provide any necessary background information for your classmates to understand your area of focus. Remember to include citations as necessary.
- Your presentation should be five minutes maximum (practice in advance and time yourself to be sure you can fit in all the information you want to include)
- You may use powerpoint, handouts, etc., as you think will benefit your presentation
- You will present to a small group (not to the whole class). Students will write comments on one another's presentations and will grade one another (students' grades of one another will be averaged together to count for one third of their presentation grade with the TA/my grade accounting for two thirds).

Letter to newspaper editor or government official

- Write a letter to a newspaper editor or government official summarizing your logic and conclusions from your family impact paper.
- If applicable, the letter should incorporate any improvements from the feedback you receive on your family impact paper (i.e., if I point out an area of your argument that

needs improvement in the paper, be sure not to just repeat the flawed argument in the letter).

- The choice of newspaper/government official should be appropriate for your topic (e.g., a policy about child care in Dane county won't be of great interest in all likelihood to the editor of the New York Times; an issue in front of the Madison school board won't be of great interest in all likelihood to Vice President Biden, etc.).
- The letter should be approximately one page. Brevity is key here. Be sure to focus on communicating your most important points with succinct language while still using persuasive logic (as opposed to making unsupported assertions).
- I strongly encourage you to actually send these letters – make your voice heard! In the past, students have seen their letters actually published!

Bonus response papers

- You have the opportunity to earn bonus points by writing one-page responses to one of the questions posed at the beginning of each chapter we read from the Bogenschneider book. You can only write one response paper per chapter (you may choose which question from that chapter to answer).
- You can earn a quarter point toward your final grade for an okay response and a half point for a good response. No points will be given for a poor response. You can write up to 10 response papers to possibly earn a total of five points toward your final grade (e.g., if you end up with an 85 in the class and you earn those five points, your final grade would go from a B to an A/B).
- Response papers are due at the start of the week for which the chapter is assigned, i.e., they must be in the dropbox on the course website on Tuesdays by 11am.

Course Outline

Week One (September 3, 5): General introduction

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 11 “What policymakers and the policy process are really like”
 - First Measured Century: “Government Spending”
<http://www.pbs.org/fmc/book/11government1.htm> & “Federal Entitlements” <http://www.pbs.org/fmc/book/11government3.htm>

Week Two (September 10, 12): Introduction to families in the US

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 6 “How does society shape families: A U.S. view”
 - First Measured Century, Chapter 4 (read all sections listed in the left-hand column) <http://www.pbs.org/fmc/book/4family1.htm>
 - Cherlin, *Marriage Go Round*, Introduction & Chapter 1

Week Three (September 17, 19): Bringing together family & policy

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 2 “Why we should focus on families in policymaking, and why we don't”

- Institute for Research on Poverty, “How is poverty measured in the United States” <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq2.htm>
- Institute for Research on Poverty, “Who is poor?” <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq3.htm>

QUIZ #1

Week Four (September 24, 26): Using a family impact lens

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 3 “Family policy and the family impact lens: An identity of their own”
 - Sweet, Swisher, & Moen. 2005. Selecting and assessing the family-friendly community: Adaptive strategies of middle-class, dual-earner couples. *Family Relations*.
<http://www.soc.umn.edu/~moen/PDFs/Selecting%20and%20Assessing%20-%20Family%20Relations.pdf>
 - As you read, consider: Can families themselves use a family impact lens versus an individualistic lens to make decisions about their lives?

Week Five (October 1, 3): Individual rights and family responsibilities: Competing or compatible?

- **Reading assignments:**
 - Chapter 4 “A policy process biased toward individual rights over family responsibilities”
 - Thottam. 2005. Reworking Work. *Time Magazine*.
<http://www.soc.umn.edu/~moen/Media/TimeJuly25.pdf>
 - Haskins, Waldfogel, & McLanahan. 2011. Work-family conflict: Look to employers and communities for solutions. *The Future of Children*.
http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/21_02_PolicyBrief.pdf
 - As you read, consider: Think about whether companies (as opposed to just governments) could use a family impact lens. Is this possible? Is it common? Should companies take a family impact lens to designing the organization and policies of the workplace? Should government force companies to design their policies using a family impact lens?

Week Six (October 8, 10): Changing families: Are you concerned, satisfied, or impatient?

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 9 “Bridging controversy and building consensus: The theory of paradox”
 - Smock & Manning. 2004. Living together unmarried in the United States: Demographic perspectives and implications for family policy. BGSU Working Paper Series. <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/cas/file35392.pdf>
 - Haskins & Sawhill. 2009. Chapter 10: Strengthening families. *Creating an Opportunity Society*.

- As you read, consider:
 - In the book from which this chapter is taken, Haskins & Sawhill have several chapters devoted to policy proposals. These chapters are entitled: “Expanding educational opportunity,” “Supporting and encouraging work,” and “Strengthening families.” Based on what you read, to what extent do you think they are taking a family-oriented versus individual-oriented approach to their policy proposals?
 - Are these policy proposals coming from the concerned, satisfied, or impatient camps?
 - What do you think of their policy proposals? Are there any ways you would suggest rethinking their proposals?

QUIZ #2

Week Seven (October 15, 17): Advocacy or Education?

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 15 “Which approach is best for getting involved in family policy: advocacy or education?”
 - “Education vs. advocacy.” *Clearing: A Resource Journal of Environmental and Place-based Education*.
<http://www.clearingmagazine.org/online/archives/2230> (Read the piece and the comments below.)
 - Goodstein. 2009. Education or advocacy? Engaging a hotter world. Inside Higher Education.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2009/01/20/goodstein> (Read the piece and the comments below.)
 - As you read, consider: How are the views of education versus advocacy in the two environmental pieces similar to or different from one another and from the chapter in our book?

Week Eight (October 22, 24): Applying what we’ve learned to current policy issues

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 8 “How current policy issues can benefit from the family impact lens”
 - Turney & Wildeman. 2013. Redefining relationships: Explaining the countervailing consequences of paternal incarceration for parenting. National Center for Family and Marriage Research Working Paper Series.
http://ncfmr.bgsu.edu/pdf/Kristin%20Turney_Christopher%20Wildeman/file125221.pdf (Unless you are comfortable with statistical analyses, don't worry about understanding the intricacies of this study – read the beginning and ending of the article more closely and just skim over the Data, Measures, and Analytic Strategy and Results sections if reading such things makes your eyes cross).

Week Nine (October 29, 31): Learning from family policy's history

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 10 "Looking back to move forward: Lessons from the origins of family policy"
 - Moen & Jull. 1995. Informing family policies: The uses of social research. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 16, 79-107.
 - Ooms. 1984. The necessity of a family perspective. *Journal of Family Issues*, 5, 160-181.

QUIZ #3

Week Ten (November 5, 7): Applying the family impact lens to policy

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 12 "Building family-focused policy: The family impact lens toolkit"
 - Meyer, Cancian, & Cook. 2005. Multiple-partner fertility: Incidence and implications for child support policy. *The Social Service Review*, 79, 577-601.
<http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/Courses/PA882/Meyer.Cancian.Cook.05.pdf>
 - As you read, consider: Do the researchers take a family- or individual-focused approach to studying the issue of child support policy? How might their study have been different if they'd taken the other approach?

Week Eleven (November 12, 14): Family Impact Analysis

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 13 "Building evidence-based policy: Insights from the Family Impact Seminars"
 - Choose three of the following options (these will also serve as the basis for your assessments of Family Impact Analysis paper)
 - Differential Response: A Family Impact Analysis - Kristin Abner and Rachel Gordon, 2012
http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_drfa.pdf
 - Developing an Early Childhood and Education Program: Implications from a Family Impact Analysis of the Child-Parent Center Program - Stephanie Eddy, 2012
http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_decep.pdf
 - Viewing After-School Programs Through a Family Impact Lens - Woon Kyung Lee, 2012
http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_vasptfil.pdf
 - A Family Perspective on the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 - Mary Breidenbach, 2003
http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fpfmla.pdf
 - A Family Perspective on Home Visiting Programs - Jennifer Park, 2003
http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fphvp.pdf

- A Family Perspective on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C: Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities - Elizabeth Gross, 2003 http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fpideac.pdf
- A Family Perspective of the Mental Health Parity Act - Karla Balling, 2003 http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fpmhp.pdf
- A Family Perspective on a Program for Bone Marrow Transplantation of Adults - Linda Young, 2003 http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fppbmta.pdf
- A Family Perspective on a Temperament Based Parenting Program - Carol Ostergren, 2003 www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fptbpp.pdf
- A Family Perspective on Transracial Adoption - Maureen Ittig, 2003 http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_fpta.pdf

Week Twelve (November 19, 21): International perspectives on family policy

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 5 "How do families support society and how do societies support families: A global view"
 - Lokteff & Piercy. 2012. "Who cares for the children?" Lessons from a global perspective of child care policy. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 21, 120-130.

QUIZ #4

Week Thirteen (November 26; no class November 28 for Thanksgiving): Teaching family policy

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Bogenschneider. 2006. Teaching family policy in undergraduate and graduate classrooms: Why it's important and how to do it better. *Family Relations*, 55, 16-28. <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/FileExchange/Bogenschneider.pdf>
 - Teaching family policy. Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars. <http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/index.asp?p=2&page=teachingfamilypolicy> (look around this portion of the website (e.g., Introductory Family Policy Lecture, Undergraduate & Graduate Syllabi, Definitions & Dimensions, Activities & Assignments, Training & Internship Opportunities)

Week Fourteen (December 3, 5): Turning the family impact perspective into a career

- **Reading assignment:**
 - Chapter 14 "Deciding what you can do: Careers in family policy"
 - There are nine professional roles outlined in the chapter; read the portion of the chapter that discusses the one that is of interest to you and use it to write your paper.
- Student presentations, 5 minutes (half the class will present on the 5th and the other half will present on the 12th; you will be presenting in small groups).

QUIZ #5

Week Fifteen (December 12)

- **No readings**
- **No class December 10; office hours by appointment only this week**
- Student presentations, 5 minutes (half the class will present on the 5th and the other half will present on the 12th; you will be presenting in small groups).