

**POLICY AND SOCIAL CHANGE**  
**SOC 4140 – Section 001**  
**Fall 2015**

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Class Meetings: 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. Tu/Th in Long 123

Instructor: Jennifer Holland, LMSW  
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Office Hours: M 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.,  
Tu & Th 11:00 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.,  
F 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.,  
and by appointment

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**Official Course Description:** This course uses the sociological perspective to examine policy development, implementation, and evaluation in the public and private sectors. More specifically, it focuses on values and ethics and effects of social change efforts on the outcomes of policy formation, social planning, and implementation. Prerequisites: SOC 2010 or 2020 and junior standing.

**Critical Thinking Emphasis:** This course is part of the Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup> program, the university's Quality Enhancement Plan, which seeks to enhance the critical thinking skills of Clemson students through transformative learning experiences; therefore, this course will be discussion-based, communication-intensive, and engagement-rich. Students will be expected to challenge their own assumptions and stretch the limits of their imaginations to identify and analyze existing social problems, policies, and programs and to propose alternative solutions to multifaceted problems.

**Critical Thinking Methods and Testing:** Although traditionally common pedagogical methods such as lecture, reading, and class discussion will be employed, much of the learning in this course will take place as students wrestle individually with complex social problems, communicate their thoughts to others, and then reflect upon the processes by which their thoughts developed. We will rely heavily upon case work, student-designed and led activities, and group projects and presentations. Critical thinking methods such as SEEI (State, Elaborate, Exemplify, and Illustrate) and the case method will be employed. Students will also learn to work their way around the Elements of Thought wheel and will have the opportunity to design critical thinking activities and assignments for their classmates. Finally, all students in the class will be responsible for completing the California Critical Thinking Skills Test at the beginning and end of the semester in order to allow for measurement of changes in critical thinking ability that occur over the course of the semester. Students will take this test online, and although the results will not affect students' course grade, it is expected that all class members will give their best effort on the exam, as test results will provide valuable assessment information for the university and the Clemson Thinks<sup>2</sup> program.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** After completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Identify and analyze multidimensional social problems and evaluate the impact of personal values and social context on their definition.
- 2) Break down the steps in the policy development process and discuss the means by which various stakeholders influence the design of social policies and programs.
- 3) Pinpoint and evaluate the consequences of a variety of social welfare policies as they are currently implemented in the United States.
- 4) Discuss current U.S. social policy as it relates to issues of poverty, health, education, child welfare and domestic violence, and mental health and substance abuse; analyze current policies and programs in these areas; and propose and assess alternative solutions.

- 5) Formulate arguments in favor of and against existing social policies and justify personal positions as they relate to particular social welfare policies and programs.
- 6) Plan activities and develop and present material to educate other students about selected social policies and programs.
- 7) Synthesize information from a variety of sources in order to create proposed solutions to social problems outlined in sample cases.

**Required Text:** Students in this course are required to read a number of online articles that can be found in the Information folder on Blackboard, as well as additional readings from the following text:

Segal, E. A. (2013). *Social welfare policy and social programs: A values perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

### **Course Policies**

1) *Academic Integrity:* In accordance with Clemson University's official statement on academic integrity, which is outlined in detail beginning on page 32 of the *Undergraduate Announcements*, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Acts of academic dishonesty include lying, cheating, stealing, and plagiarism. If there is evidence that a student has committed any of these violations, a charge of misconduct will be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Undergraduate Studies for further investigation. If a student is found to be in violation of Clemson's academic integrity policy, a grade of F for the assignment, and possibly the course, will result. (Please note that, for the purpose of this class, reuse of one's own work is not considered academic dishonesty.)

2) *Accommodations:* Students with disabilities who require accommodations should contact the Office of Student Disability Services within the first month of the semester and then bring an accommodations letter to the instructor so that a plan can be made to address any special needs.

3) *Attendance:* Regular attendance is critical to students' success in this course; therefore, attendance will be taken during every class period. Students are allowed two absences without penalty. For each subsequent absence, points will be deducted from a student's final point total for the semester in the following manner: 5 points for the third absence, 10 additional points for the fourth, 15 for the fifth, and 20 for the sixth. This policy applies to all absences, regardless of cause (illness, family and relationship problems, work obligations, extracurricular activities, late enrollment, etc.); however, the instructor may choose to waive the point deduction if a student provides a valid, written excuse for an absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor within one week of the absence and to provide appropriate documentation to support the excuse; otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused and the point deduction will apply.

**Please note that if a student misses more than six class periods, the instructor will drop the student from the roll (if the last day to withdraw has not yet passed and the student has withdrawal hours remaining) or assign a grade of F for the course. Even if some absences are excused, no student may miss more than six class periods.** Students who anticipate the need for an extended period of absence should contact the Dean of Students Office (656-0935).

When absent from a regular class period, students should contact a classmate to secure any notes that they have missed. If a student is absent when an in-class assignment or exam is administered, he or she must contact the instructor within 24 hours and provide a valid written excuse for the absence in order to be allowed to make up the assignment. Unless the absence is prearranged or due to an emergency, ten percent of the total possible points for the assignment will be deducted from the student's grade for each day that passes before the assignment or test is submitted. Make-up

assignments may vary in format from those administered in class, and there may be some assignments that, due to their nature, are impossible to make up; in these instances, students will receive a grade of zero. Also, students who do not take the initiative to arrange make-up tests and exercises according to these guidelines will receive a grade of zero for the assignments that they miss.

Because it is in the best interest of the class, the student, and the instructor for students to be present during each class period, those students who attend every class session during the semester—from the first to the last—will have five points added to their point total at the end of the semester. Please note that these points represent *extra* credit for those students who are present during *every* class period; failure to receive these points in no way constitutes a grade penalty against those who must miss class.

4) *Classroom Conduct*: Students are expected to arrive to class prepared and on time, to participate in class activities, and to remain in class until dismissed by the instructor. Students who arrive to class excessively late or who leave early will be counted absent for half of a class period; therefore, every other (i.e., the second or fourth) late arrival or early departure will incur the same penalty as one absence. Before class, students are expected to silence and put away all electronic devices, including cell phones and laptops. Questions and comments related to the course material are always welcome; however, individual conversations and acts of incivility and disrespect will not be tolerated.

5) *Preparation for Class*: Students are expected to complete all assigned readings by the due dates indicated on the course schedule. Partial outlines of the instructor's lecture notes may be found in the Content folder on Blackboard, and students are encouraged to print these notes and bring them to class. (Please note that portions of the lecture notes and presentations may contain copyrighted materials that are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Teach Act and that are intended to be used only by students within the course and only for instructional purposes. Please do not disseminate these materials further.) When written assignments are due, they must be turned in during class on the dates indicated on the course schedule. Ten percent of an assignment's total value will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late. An extension of one class period will be given to all students if the university cancels class (i.e., due to inclement weather) on the day that a test or assignment was due.

6) *Tardiness of the Instructor*: Students may dismiss themselves if the instructor fails to arrive within fifteen minutes after a class period was scheduled to begin.

7) *Title IX*: Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator. He also is the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.565.0899 (TDD).

### **Methods of Evaluation**

Each student's final grade for the course will be determined by his or her performance on two exams, a student-led class activity, a final paper or presentation, and a number of small in-class and homework assignments. Instructions for all assignments, as well as grading rubrics (when applicable), will be provided in advance in class and/or on Blackboard.

*Exams*: Students will complete two exams this semester that require demonstration and application of knowledge of social policies and programs within the United States. Each test will consist of a variety

of multiple choice, matching, true-false, short answer, and essay questions that will be drawn from readings, lectures, class discussions, group activities, and videos. Each exam will be worth 100 points.

*Student-Led Class:* Students will be divided into four groups that correspond with the major social welfare issues discussed in the second unit of the course (poverty, child welfare and domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse, and health and education). Groups will be responsible for leading one class period each on their assigned subjects. Groups must develop student learning outcomes for their class period, select appropriate class readings, plan an activity for the day (i.e., an on-campus field trip, guest speaker, group exercise), and create a related assignment for the class to complete. Up to 100 points may be earned for this project.

*Final Paper or Presentation:* In lieu of a traditional final exam, students will have the option to submit an individual policy analysis paper or to participate in a group presentation. Both options are worth a total of 100 points. Students who choose to write a paper will be required to fully analyze a selected social policy and then to take and defend a position on it. Students who select the presentation option will work in groups of three or four to present, in a creative and engaging format (i.e., video, skit, musical performance, PechaKucha), an overview of a particular social problem and current attempts to address it. For both options, students will use the Elements of Thought wheel to identify the question at issue, important assumptions, concepts, information, and conclusions related to the issue, different points of view on it, and potential implications and consequences of the problem and related policies. This paper or presentation will serve as students' CT<sup>2</sup> artifact. Both options will allow students to demonstrate successful accomplishment of learning outcomes such as identifying and analyzing multidimensional social problems, evaluating the influence of social context on problem definition, exploring the roles played by various stakeholders in policy development, and determining potential implications of social welfare policies as they are currently implemented.

*Small Assignments and Participation:* In order to apply course concepts and engage with class material, students will complete a number of smaller assignments throughout the course of the semester. These assignments will include those administered during student-led class periods, as well as those assigned by the instructor as in-class activities or homework assignments. Examples include case write-ups, reflection essays, quizzes, SEEI's, and group activities. Points may also be awarded for participation in class discussion during some class periods. All of the assignments and participation points together will be worth a total of 100 points.

*Extra Credit:* Up to five extra credit points are available to students with exemplary attendance records, as noted in the Course Policies section above. Additional opportunities for extra credit may be offered to the class at the instructor's discretion; however, no individual requests for extra credit will be granted, so students who are struggling with the course material should contact the instructor in a timely manner to request assistance.

### **Grade Computation:**

\*\*\*NOTE THAT POINT CUT-OFFS ARE FIRM AND WILL NOT BE NEGOTIATED.\*\*\*

All grade disputes must be submitted in writing within one week of the return of the assignment.

2 Exams @ 100 points each	200 points	A = 450 or more points
Student-Led Class	100 points	B = 400 – 449.5 points
Final Paper or Presentation	100 points	C = 350 – 399.5 points
<u>Small Assignments/Participation</u>	<u>100 points</u>	D = 300 – 349.5 points
<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>500 points</b>	F = 299.5 or fewer points

## SOC 4140 COURSE SCHEDULE

Below you will find a general outline of course topics for the semester. Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and/or by email. In the last column below, readings from the textbook indicate the author's name and page numbers, while those followed by (BB) are posted in the Information folder on Blackboard.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments Due</b>
Th Aug 20	Introduction to the Course	
Tu Aug 25	Introduction to Critical Thinking Concepts	Paul & Elder (BB)
Th Aug 27	Public Issues and Social Problems	Mills (BB); Best (BB)
Tu Sept 1	Values and Social Welfare Policy	Segal (1-26); <b>CA CT Test Due</b>
Th Sept 3	Policy Development and Analysis	Segal (80-116); <b>Values HW Due</b>
Tu Sept 8	Policy Analysis (cont.); <b>Group WH Assignment</b>	White House (BB)
Th Sept 10	Policy Implementation and Social Programs	Segal (117-136); Harrington (BB)
Tu Sept 15	Policy Case Example: Legalization of Marijuana	
Th Sept 17	<b>***EXAM 1***</b>	
Tu Sept 22	Poverty Policy and Programs	Segal (172-199); Rank (BB)
Th Sept 24	Poverty Policy and Programs (cont.)	Segal (236-258); <b>Spent HW Due</b>
Tu Sept 29	<b>Poverty Student-Led Class/Assignment</b>	Student-Selected Reading TBA
Th Oct 1	Poverty Case Studies/ <b>Group Case Study</b>	
Tu Oct 6	Child Welfare and Domestic Violence Policy	Segal (280-300); <b>Poverty CS Due</b>
Th Oct 8	Child Welfare and DV Policy (cont.)	SC Legal Services (BB)
Th Oct 15	<b>CW and DV Student-Led Class/Assignment</b>	Student-Selected Reading TBA
Tu Oct 20	CW and DV Case Studies/ <b>Group Case Study</b>	
Th Oct 22	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy	Segal (310-336); <b>CW CS Due</b>
Tu Oct 27	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy (cont.)	Protection & Advocacy (BB)
Th Oct 29	<b>MH and SA Student-Led Class/Assignment</b>	Student-Selected Reading TBA
Tu Nov 3	MH and SA Case Studies/ <b>Group Case Study</b>	
Th Nov 5	Health Policy and Programs	NCSL (BB); <b>MH CS Due</b>
Tu Nov 10	Education Policy and Programs	Segal (300-309)
Th Nov 12	<b>Health and Ed Student-Led Class/Assignment</b>	Student-Selected Reading TBA
Tu Nov 17	Health and Ed Case Studies/ <b>Group Case Study</b>	
Th Nov 19	<b>***EXAM 2***</b>	
Tu Nov 24	<b>Proposal for Final Paper or Presentation Due</b>	
Tu Dec 1	<b>CA CT Test Administered in Class</b>	
Th Dec 3	Course Wrap-Up	
W Dec 9 (8:00 a.m.)	<b>*** FINAL PAPER OR PRESENTATION DUE***</b>	