UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs  
Department of Social Welfare

SW M290P: Aging Policy: Elderly, Families and Communities

Spring Quarter, 2013   Tuesdays 2:00 p.m. – 4:50 p.m., 3343 Public Affairs Building

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Office Hours: By appointment only

Course Description:

The aging of the American population poses major challenges to public policy makers at all levels of government. The problems and issues facing older adults and society require practitioners, researchers, public officials, and the general public to be familiar with ageing and to be able to evaluate the various proposals, reforms, and debates surrounding policy decisions affecting the elderly. Fiscal pressures and changes in the relationships among governments at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as between the public and private sectors, ensure that programs and services for the elderly will be major factors in the actions, decisions and proposals of elected and appointed officials, advocacy groups, the media and government agencies. Health, long-term care, death and dying, employment and retirement, income security, social services and housing all highlight the importance of examining the development of policies for older persons and analyzing the current systems of programs and services for older persons.

Students should expect the following:

1. Students will be provided with an overview of social conditions, issues and problems that affect aging in the U.S.
2. Student will learn how to analyze major public policies for the elderly and their families.
3. Students will examine various models and concepts of the policy process, analysis and evaluation and their applications to aging policy.
4. Students will be encouraged to consider the effects of public policies on individuals, families and communities.
5. Students will learn that aging policy serves as a useful tool for understanding the broader nature of public policy and politics in a democratic society.
6. Students will focus on several policy developments that serve as case examples of issues and trends facing older persons, their families and practitioners with particular attention to the nexus of aging and diversity.
7. Students will explore “hot topics” in aging policy such as entitlement reform and long-term care, disability and chronic conditions and retirement security.
Learning outcomes:

1. To assess and apply demographic, socio-economic, and other characteristics of the elderly to policy and practice;
2. To appreciate diversity and its implications for policies affecting the nation’s elderly;
3. To understand the major social conditions and problems that affect the elderly;
4. To develop an astute understanding of how aging policy is formulated;
5. To acquire skills to critically evaluate aging policy sources and research data;
6. To become familiar with the structure of services, programs, and laws affecting older persons and families from a federal, state and local perspective
7. To be able to objectively critique existing policies and debate contemporary issues;
8. To develop an in-depth knowledge of at least one particular topic;
9. To assess all sides of a particular issue in an objective and analytical manner;
10. To understand the evolving political, social, and economic climates in the aging policy area and how they affect racial/ethnic minorities, women and children, and other diverse populations;
11. To analyze and evaluate major social policies for the elderly and their families using a systematic and objective framework;
12. To identify social policy values and ethical dilemmas relevant to policy practice in the field;
13. To apply theoretical frameworks to policy analysis

REQUIRED TEXTS


*Note: Lynch, Fred (LF)

Moody, Harry R. (MH)

Niles-Yokum, K. and Wagner, D. (NYK & WD)

Schulz, James H. & Binstock, Robert H (SJ & BR)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Each student will be required to successfully complete several measures of learning. These measures will be due or administrated on the following dates and will contribute to the final course grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Group Exercise: Contemporary Events &amp; Hot Topics</td>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Policy Brief 1</td>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Policy Brief 2</td>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Policy Paper</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Students are required to attend and participate in each session. Students are also expected to complete all readings before coming to class. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

Course assignments:

Given the fluid nature of aging policy development, it becomes important to keep pace with fast moving events. Therefore, students will be expected to monitor contemporary developments. Due to the complexity and controversy around issues, the class will take part in a group exercise. Two policy briefs will be required during the quarter on topics addressed in the media during the spring quarter. In addition, a major policy paper will lead to an in-depth knowledge of a policy outcome.

1) Group Exercise: Contemporary Events & Hot Topics
   “Why is Long-Term Care and Death & Dying the Bridesmaid and Never the Bride?”

   Description: Depending on the number of students, this exercise will focus on long-term care, the demise of the CLASS Act and end-of-life and why these policy topics have yet to surface as major policy concerns. The class will make a major presentation on these questions. These topics will be divided into several components, including:
   1. Healthcare reform and the CLASS Act
   2. Definition and varying descriptions of what constitutes long-term supports and services
   3. Nexus of aging, death & dying, and the connection with long-term care
   4. Demographics, social and personal variables including the “somber” aspects of these issues
   5. The ongoing politics of long-term care, death & dying, and the looming crisis

   The entire group will integrate these areas and debate the issue, “Why is Long-Term Care and End-of-Life the Bridesmaid and Never the Bride?”

2) Policy Briefs 1 & 2

   Description: Each policy brief will be 2 - 3 pages, doubled spaced, listing citations and sources including visual, print and internet
The students will address:

- The topic and relevance to public policy
- An explanation of the impact on older persons and aging society
- The larger, unstated issues from this topic
- Your views and opinions
- The author, source of the piece, the underlying bias and point of view

3) Policy Paper

The policy paper is designed to provide an opportunity to develop an in-depth knowledge of a policy outcome. The purpose of this assignment is to make students “think” about the social, economic, and political importance of aging issues currently being faced by society. The policy paper will explore a broad policy issue that lends itself to clues and implications for the future aging of the US, in particular speculation about what awaits the Baby Boomers when they turn 80 years old. International and global aging can also be the focus of the paper, in that regard, speculation about aging in the year 2030. Students should choose a theoretical framework and be able to demonstrate conceptualization of theory. Detailed criteria will be presented in class.

Guidelines:
The paper should be 10 -15 pages, double spaced, and carefully proofread. The content should draw extensively from class readings and other sources. Students will provide a detailed bibliography – appendices do not count toward page limit. All references MUST be cited in APA format. A minimum of 10 references are expected.

4) Attendance and Participation

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Session 1 (April 4): Welcome! What Did I Get Myself Into?**

This session introduces the course objectives and learning outcomes. A case example will present a timely, yet controversial entitlement issue.

**Required Readings:** NA

**Topics:**

- Course outline & objectives
- Course requirements
- Budgetary Politics and Entitlement Programs
- Contemporary relevance of aging policy
Session 2 (April 11): American Demographics and Political Institutions: Why Does So Little Get Done As the Demographic Volcano Builds?

This session will provide an update on the demographic trends and available data. In order to understand aging politics, we will revisit the American political experiment and its founding documents.

Topics:
- Overview of demographic trends: Key Concepts
- Life Expectancy, Longevity, Median Age, Actuarial Inevitability
- American political democracy: fluid, permeable and complex

*Class Bio’s Due

Required Readings:

Class Handout: The founding documents: The Bill of Rights, The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution Class Handout: How a Bill Becomes a Law?
MH: Basic Concept 1: A Life Course Perspective on Aging, pg. 1 - 26
MH: Basic Concepts II: Aging, Health Care, and Society, pg. 129 - 161

Session 3 (April 18): Demographic Trends and A Changing America or Why we will Look, Talk, Act and Be Different

The USA, like many nations is becoming older. However, we are unique given rapid changes in diversity, lifestyles and family structures.

Topics:
- Demographic Milestones 2030 & 2050
- Shifting Trends
  - Age Pyramids
  - Gender, Cohort
  - Race, Ethnicity
  - Immigration

Required Readings:

MH: Basic Concept 1: Social and Economic Outlook for An Aging Society, pgs. 293 - 324
Controversy 7: Should People Have the Choice to End their Lives, pgs. 261-272

Session 4 (April 25): The Politics of Aging: Why A Politician Would Rather Visit A Senior Center Than A College Campus

The importance of senior activism and senior voting and the examination of old-age politics and the growth of advocacy organizations.

Topics:
- Historical Antecedents
- Interest group politics
- Electoral politics and the senior votes
- Aging policy and generational politics
- Presidential campaigns, demagoguery and ideological disputes
- Group exercise

Required Readings:

SJ & BR: Chapter 9 “A Gerontocracy? The Politics of Aging,” pg. 201 - 222
SJ & BR: Chapter 10 “Framing the Issues for an Aging Nation,” pg. 223 - 235
Session 5 (May 2): Leadership for the Next Elders: Or Who Will be the Next Maggie Kuhn or Claude Pepper

The next generation of elders appears to be adrift and with no spokesperson’s or advocates. Who should, will, must come forward?

Required Readings: See Handouts

Session 6 (May 9): Theoretical Frameworks: Making Sense of the Displaced Pieces of a Policy Puzzle

A report on the policy developments of AARP and the instructor’s ongoing involvement in national policy agenda setting on behalf of the elderly and baby boomers.

An introduction to concepts, models and frameworks necessary for analyzing political developments

Required Readings:

1. NYK & WD: Chapter 2: The Older Americans Act
2. NYK & WD: Chapter 9: Support for Older Adults and Caregivers

Session 7 (May 16): White House Conferences on Aging: Symbolic Politics and the Evolution of Old-Age Policy

This session draws on White House Conferences on Aging as a backdrop to policy, politics and aging.

Required Readings:

1. MH: Controversy 1: Does Old Age Have Meaning?, pg. 27 - 51
2. MH: Controversy 2: Why Do Our Bodies Grow Old?, pg. 53 - 91
Session 8 (May 23): Entitlement Reform: What Can You Expect When You’re 64?

This session examines the debates surrounding public benefit programs and the extent to which politics and public opinion might alter what we receive when we are old. The reality may be a new type of retirement depending on contemporary political debates and policy decisions.

Topics:
- Entitlement Reform: What is it exactly?
- Medicare, Medicaid, the Older Americans Act and Pension Promises
- Ideological and philosophical spectrums on governance and individual expectations
- Presidential campaigns and the politics of aging

Required Readings:
1. MH: Controversy 4: Should We Ration Health Care for Older People?, pg. 163-195
2. MH: Controversy 8: Should Age or Need be the Basis for Entitlement?, pg. 325-364

Session 9 (May 30): The Politics of Generational Relationships: Why the Baby Boomers Must be Nice to Their Kids, Other People’s Kids and Immigrants

This session examines cohorts and generations as a subtext to the politics of aging and public policy with particular focus on aging baby boomers and the implications for Gen X, Y and I.

Topics:
- Cohort analysis
- Generational tensions
- Baby Boomers, the Greatest Generation, Generations X, Y & I
- Generational burdens and intergenerational sharings
- The popular culture: American Graffiti, Forest Gump and Cocoon.

Required Readings:
1. MH: Controversy 11: “Aging Boomers: Boom or Bust”, pg. 441 - 450
2. MH: Controversy 5: “Should Families Provide for Their Own?”, pg. 197 - 205
3. SJ & BR: Chapter 7: “To Work or Not to Work: That is the Question” pg. 137 - 170

Session 10 (June 6): Aging: A Global Phenomenon

This session examines the nexus of aging and diversity and the globalization of longevity. The World Congress on Gerontology in Seoul, Korea symbolizes the New Global Aging

Topics:
- Nexus
- Minority aging
- Immigration and diversity
- Global and international aging
- Age, race stratification and public policy

Required Readings:
1. NYK & WD: Chapter 14: Nexus of Policy, Program and Practice
2. NYK & WD: Chapter 15: Challenges for the Aging Network
3. MH: Global Perspectives