

**THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

**HS 300 THEORIES OF SOCIAL POLICY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE
FALL 2008**

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday, by appointment

This seminar develops theoretical perspectives on social policy, social justice, and social change. It also suggests a framework for analyzing, developing, and evaluating social policies and policy systems.

The seminar assists students to think critically, to clarify their assumptions and values, and to develop their own positions on social issues, rather than to accept unexamined assumptions and positions that tend to be taken-for-granted in their cultures.

The orientation of the seminar is historical, cross-cultural, and inter-disciplinary. It uses insights from the life experiences of students, and from scholarly disciplines including anthropology, biology, demography, ecology, economics, history, philosophy, politics, psychology, sociology, minority studies, women studies, and policy studies.

SEMINAR THEMES

- meaning of social policy
- aspects of the human condition relevant to social evolution and policy development
- real and perceived human needs and interests
- human needs and individual and social development
- human needs, social policies, and social institutions
- key variables of social policy systems and of social change
- outcome variables of social policy systems and of social change
- consciousness: medium of social continuity and social change
- critical consciousness and social change
- criterion to evaluate social policies, policy systems, and social change
- variability of social policies
- social policies and social problems
- social policies and economic policies

- human nature and social policies
- individual, institutional, and global dimensions of social justice
- societal violence, oppression, socially structured inequalities, domination and exploitation
- forces affecting social evolution
- analysis and development of social policies and policy systems
- social policies and social values conducive to fulfillment of real human needs and human development
- social change strategies toward social justice and human liberation

EXPECTATIONS and FEEDBACK

The seminar uses a style conducive to self-directed study.

Students should keep a journal of reflections relevant to the seminar.

Students should select social policy issues for oral and written presentations.

By the end of the term, students should write a statement on their goals for the seminar, the work they did to attain these goals, and an evaluation of their learning.

Feedback to students will be provided in individual meetings with the instructor throughout and after the seminar.

TEXTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gil, David G. Unraveling Social Policy, (5th revised edition), Schenkman, 1992,

Gil, David G. Confronting Injustice and Oppression, Columbia University Press, 1998,

A classified bibliography of recommended readings is attached.

UNIVERSITY NOTICES

If you have a documented disability and require any accommodations, please bring this to my attention. If you have any questions about learning or other disabilities, contact the disabilities coordinator of the Heller School.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity described in section 3 of Rights and Responsibilities, may result in failure in the course or on an assignment, and could end in the suspension from the University.