Topics in Public Policy: Social Welfare Policy (PS 330)
Dr. Dennis Plane

EMAIL: plane@juniata.edu
IM: dennisplane
Office: Good 317
Phone: 641.3644 (office)

Description: This is an upper-level seminar in public policy that examines various policies that comprise the welfare state. These include public assistance ("welfare"), retirement (Social Security), healthcare (including Medicare and Medicaid), and education policy. The class encourages students to understand how contemporary policies operate and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Students are also encouraged to think about how and whether such policies should be changed. This class will be run using the seminar model with lots of class discussion. In addition, emphasis is placed on effective writing.

Books to Purchase:

Other Required Readings:
- The New York Times. Students are expected to keep up with current events, especially as they relate to social welfare policy.
- Additional required readings will be made available on the P drive or will be sent to the students via email.

Course Requirements:
- Three in-class exams (20% each): Each exam will include information discussed in class and information included in the readings (whether or not discussed in class). The exam will include short answer and essay questions.
- Optional final: Students have the option of taking the final exam on the date assigned by the College. The grade on the optional final will replace the student’s lowest exam grade.
- Two policy papers (15% each): Students will write two research papers selected from the three general subjects covered in this course: poverty / retirement policy, healthcare policy, and education policy. All topics must be approved by me by the deadline indicated on the syllabus. (If the student writes all three papers, the best two grades will count.)
• Secretary (5%): Students will take turns acting as secretary. Two written documents and an oral presentation will be due the following class period. (Give hard copies to me and upload soft copies to the P drive.) Students can “trade” secretarial duties if a written agreement is signed by both students and submitted to the instructor. Secretaries have following three duties:
  1. Writing a one-page, single-spaced summary of the assigned reading for the day you are secretary and posting it to the P drive. (Title your document “MM.DD.YY Reading Summary [Description]”)
  2. Writing a summary of the class discussion for the day you are secretary. You should focus on how the class discussion evaluates, interprets, deviates from, or expands on the reading. (Title your document “MM.DD.YY Discussion Summary [Description]”)
  3. On the class period following your stint as secretary, you will lead a short discussion that summarizes the readings and discussion and gets everyone “up to speed” with the topic. This should be approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Part of your grade will be evidence of mastery of the topic.

• Participation (5%): Your participation grade will be based on the following factors:
  1. Participation. The quality and frequency of your participation in class discussions.
  2. Homework. The quality of your performance on any homework assignments.
  3. Unannounced Quizzes. To ensure that you have read and thought about the readings before coming to class, I may give short unannounced quizzes. All quizzes will be open-note (but you can only use notes you created yourself). If it is clear that students are generally prepared for class, then there will be little need for quizzes.

• Attendance and Punctuality (-3 percentage points for each unexcused absence): You are expected to be in class (and on time) everyday unless there is a compelling reason for your absence. I will automatically assume that your first absence is excused (for the purposes of attendance only). If you have additional absences that you believe should be excused, you will need to fill out the “petition for an excused absence” found on the P drive. Such petitions must be submitted within one week of your return from the absence and no later than Reading Day. Arriving late or leaving early is considered half of an absence. If you arrive after or before a quiz has been given, you will receive a zero for that quiz. If you arrive to class after your name has been called for attendance, it is your responsibility to see me immediately after class so that I can change my grade book. Failure to do so may result in your tardy being considered an absence.

Course Policies:
• Make-up Quizzes. One make-up quiz will be given and it will cover anything from the last unit of the course. It will count for all quizzes you missed due to excused absences. This make-up quiz will be open note (but you can only use notes you created yourself) and given during the final exam period.
• Tests will only be given on their assigned dates unless there is a medical or other emergency. Should such an emergency occur, see me immediately to discuss the matter.
• Unexcused late assignments will receive a penalty of 10% for each class period late.
• **School Sponsored Events.** Students who will be out of town for an athletic event (or other college sponsored event) should turn in any assignments and/or be prepared to take any exams before they leave. See me to make any such arrangements.

• Students are expected to comply with all College policies regarding **academic integrity.** Academic dishonesty includes cheating, facilitating cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submission (turning in a paper in which part of all of the paper has already received credit for another course), and plagiarism. Students who violate College policies may receive a grade of F for the assignment and serious violations may result in an F for the course. All violations will be reported to the Director of Academic Support Services for recordkeeping purposes and for possible additional sanctions.

• **Withdraw Policy.** Students can withdraw from the course at any time before Thursday, April 13, 2006.

• This syllabus is not a contract. I reserve the right to add or change any course requirements, readings, and/or dates. Any such changes, however, will be announced in advance whenever possible.

**Grading Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.00 - 100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.00 - 93.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.00 - 89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.00 - 86.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.00 - 82.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.00 - 79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73.00 - 76.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.00 - 72.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.00 - 69.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63.00 - 66.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60.00 - 62.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>