HDFS 535: A Family Perspective on Policymaking
Sarah Halpern-Meekin
Monday 8:15-10:45
Education Sciences 212
Office: Nancy Nicholas Hall 4107
sarah.halpernmeekin@wisc.edu
Office hours: Mondays 11-11:30am, Wednesday 2-3pm

Course description (3 credit course)

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.

Graduate students interested in taking this course for credit will need to meet with me for additional reading and assignment instructions. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to take my graduate course (HDFS 843) instead of this course (HDFS 535).

Teaching Assistants

Emily Parrott emparrott@wisc.edu
Office: Nancy Nicholas Hall 4169
Office hours: Tuesdays 10:45-12:45

Lauren Lewis llewis3@wisc.edu
Office: Nancy Nicholas Hall 4168
Office hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30

Course policies

Cell phone policy: 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. These guidelines also apply to the use of laptops and tablets, which should be used for class-based purposes only.

Readings: Most of the readings come from the Bogenschneider textbook, which is available in the bookstore and through online vendors. Other readings can be found on the course
website or by following the links in the syllabus. 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.


**Course website:** The learn@UW course website will be used to post course content, for online quizzes, to turn in and return papers, and to post grades. If you have any trouble accessing the course website, please let me or one of the TAs know as soon as possible.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities should discuss necessary accommodations with me as soon as possible. The McBurney Disability Resource Center (702 W. Johnson, 608-263-2741, mcburney@odos.wisc.edu, www.mcburney.wisc.edu) provides useful assistance and documentation regarding physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disabilities. If you have a “visa” from the McBurney Center for special accommodations, please provide me with a copy. The McBurney Center provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of the disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.

**Religious holidays:** Absence due to observance of a religious holiday will not be counted as an absence. Students who will miss class due to religious holidays must inform the instructors during the first two weeks of class whether they will miss class during the semester for religious reasons.

**Grade dispute procedure:** 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.

**Office hours:** 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!).

**Academic dishonesty:** Students who cheat or attempt to cheat may either receive a zero score for that quiz or assignment or a failing grade for the course. In addition, the incident may 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 year, 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.

Other resources:

Employers who hire HDFS undergrads value applicants who have strong skills in technology. The Division of Information Technology (DoIT) offers free training for technology skills such as database management, desktop publishing, graphics/animation, multimedia use, and web development. Training is also available for programs such as Access, Excel, Google Docs, Illustrator, InDesign, and Powerpoint. A list of classes and training opportunities is available at www.doit.wisc.edu/trainin/student/classlist.aspx and www.doit.wisc.edu/training/pte/calendar.aspx.

The Writing Center (located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall) offers free classes in writing essay exams and individual help is offered to assist students with written assignments. For information or a listing of services please contact the Writing Center (263-1992; www.writing.wisc.edu). The website offers detailed information about the Writing Center, descriptions and schedules of classes, handouts on writing, and instruction via email.

One way to learn more about human development and families is to become a volunteer in a program that serves children, adults, and/or families. Although no course credit is given, direct experience with children, adults, and/or families will enhance your learning and may help you find a job after you graduate. If you are interested, information is available at the Volunteer Services Office – Morgridge Center for Public Service (located in Room 154 of the Red Gym, 716 Langdon Street). Please call 263-2432 for more information.

Course assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of final grade</th>
<th>Due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 online quizzes</td>
<td>5 x 6% = 30%</td>
<td>2/5-7</td>
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<td>2/26-28</td>
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<td>In-class discussion activities</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Weekly (in class)</td>
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<td>Assessments of Family Impact</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyses*</td>
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<td>Policy meetings paper*</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4/13</td>
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<td>Presentation on family impact</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family impact paper*</td>
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<td>Extra credit response papers*</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Weekly – Mondays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra credit evaluation of public official *</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5/13 7:25pm</td>
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* 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, and double spaced. **Assignments must be in the dropbox by 8am to receive full credit; late assignments will be docked one-third of a grade per day.**

Final grades are calculated as follows: 100-93 = A; 92-88 = AB; 87-83 = B; 82-78 = BC; 77-70 = C; 69-60 = D; 59-0 = F

**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 and true/false questions
- Quizzes will be available from Thursdays at 12 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
- While attendance is not required for the course, you must be present to get credit on the in-class discussion assignments.
- I will drop your lowest two grades.
- Assignments are graded zero (not completed/turned in or of such low quality that credit cannot be given), check minus, check, check plus. Check plusses are only given for outstanding work. See the discussion assignment grading rubric on the course website for further information.

**Assessment of family impact analyses**
- During Week Nine 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). Be sure to explain which Family Impact Analyses you read. You 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?

**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 “Committee Schedule” section of the state legislature’s website: [http://committeeschedule.legis.wisconsin.gov/](http://committeeschedule.legis.wisconsin.gov/). To find other types of meetings, you can search online, including using the search tool at [http://www.thedailypage.com/theguide/](http://www.thedailypage.com/theguide/) or [http://www.cityofmadison.com/citycalendar/](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 4-5-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 content 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.

- Plan ahead so that you can find and attend meetings that interest you, rather than rushing to attend whatever is happening right before the due date. If you wait until the last minute, there may not be any scheduled committee meetings to attend; this is not an assignment that can be successfully completed at the last minute.

**Family impact paper**

- Choose an area of policy—could be at the federal, state, local, or organizational level—as the focus of this 7-10 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](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 (i.e., was this an outcome the policymakers were aiming for with this policy?). Be sure to support your contentions with evidence and logic.

- Use the Family Impact Analyses you read for Week Nine for guidance on the structure and content of this paper. These also can provide you with a sense of what sorts of policies you could choose to focus on, although we don’t suggest you using a policy analyzed in one of the Week 9 readings.
• Draw on outside sources as necessary to support your points. The number of sources you should use will vary based on your particular topic. Remember to draw on an array of sources that you’re getting a well-rounded (not biased) assessment of the policy.
• 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.

Presentation on family impact paper
• You will present what you have learned in researching your family impact paper.
  o See the description of the family impact paper above. The focus of the paper, and therefore the presentation, should be a family impact assessment of your chosen policy area.
  o 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 (provided either on your slides or in a document you turn in).
• 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 are encouraged to 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.

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). Make sure to state which question you are answering at the start of your paper.
• Strong response papers will not just summarize information from the textbook in answering the question, but rather will engage analytically with the question. If you are unsure how to do this, please feel free to meet with me during office hours for further discussion.
• 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 Mondays by 8am.

**Extra credit evaluation of a public official**
- Choose a local, state, or national politician who is currently in office. Make use of the politician’s own materials (e.g., personal website) and news coverage to learn about him/her; research the extent to which this politician seems to take a family impact perspective. Remember that just using the word “family” is not the same as taking a family impact perspective.
- Write a three-page paper that states your conclusions about whether the politician takes a family impact perspective and provide evidence to support your argument. Remember to cite any and all sources you used.

**Knowledge learning outcome**
- Ability to consider and evaluate how children, adults, and families affect and are affected by policies, media, or other social institutions.

**Professional learning outcomes**
- Demonstrate scientific reasoning/critical thinking skills through engaging in critical evaluation of research articles, websites, programs, or policies.
- Demonstrate professional speaking skills through giving an oral presentation.
- Demonstrate applied professional skills by practicing working effectively with others.

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**Course Outline**

**Week One (January 26): General introduction & guide to American government**
- Reading assignment:
  - Bogenschneider, Chapter 11 “What policymakers and the policy process are really like”
  - First Measured Century: “Government Spending”

**Week Two (February 2): Introduction to family trends & overview of Wisconsin government**
- Reading assignment:
  - Bogenschneider, 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
  - For background information on the Wisconsin state government:
    http://legis.wisconsin.gov/Pages/faq.aspx

QUIZ #1
Week Three (February 9): Bringing together family & policy, & guide to public policy

- Reading assignment:
  - Bogenschneider, 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” [link](http://www.irp.wisc.edu/faqs/faq2.htm)
  - Optional: Welfare state background reading [choose to do this or not based on your own background and familiarity with the system of government assistance for people with low incomes in the United States]

Week Four (February 16): Using a family impact lens

- Reading assignment:
  - Bogenschneider, Chapter 3 “Family policy and the family impact lens: An identity of their own”
    - As you read, consider: Can families themselves use a family impact lens versus an individualistic lens to make decisions about their lives?

Week Five (February 23): Changing families: Are you concerned, satisfied, or impatient?, & political continuum and political parties

- Reading assignment:
  - Bogenschneider, Chapter 9 "Bridging controversy and building consensus: The theory of paradox"
    - 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 Six (March 2): Individual rights and family responsibilities: Competing or compatible?
• Reading assignments:
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 4 “A policy process biased toward individual rights over family responsibilities”
  ▪ 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 Seven (March 9): Policymaking and Policymakers
• Field trip: Visit to the State Capitol – we will meet at the Capitol building at 8:50am at the entrance closest to State Street on the first floor.
• Reading assignment:
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 14 “Deciding what you can do: Careers in family policy”

Week Eight (March 16): Advocacy or Education?
• In class: Guest speaker
• Reading assignment:
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 15 “Which approach is best for getting involved in family policy: advocacy or education?”
  o “Education vs. advocacy.” Clearing: A Resource Journal of Environmental and Place-based Education. http://clearingmagazine.org/archives/2230 (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?

QUIZ #3
Week Nine (March 23): Family Impact Analysis

• Reading assignment:
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 13 “Building evidence-based policy: Insights from the Family Impact Seminars”
  o Choose three of the following options (these will also serve as the basis for your assessments of Family Impact Analysis paper)
      http://www.familyimpactseminars.org/fia_analyses_drfia.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_decepdf.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_fpflma.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 Ten (April 6): Applying the family impact lens to policy, & evaluating policy

• Reading assignment:
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 12 “Building family-focused policy: The family impact lens toolkit”
    http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/dps/pdfs/dp130005.pdf?origin=publication_detail
    ▪ 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?
  o Cochran et al. 2009. Pages 7-15. [Document is on the course website under the Week 3 readings—you read pages 1-6 for your previous assignment.]

**Week Eleven (April 13): Learning from family policy’s history & current events**

- **In class:** Guest speaker
- **Reading assignment:**
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 10 “Looking back to move forward: Lessons from the origins of family policy”

**QUIZ #4**

**Week Twelve (April 20): Applying what we’ve learned to current policy issues**

- **Reading assignment:**
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 8 “How current policy issues can benefit from the family impact lens”
  o Turney & Wildeman. 2013. Redefining relationships: Explaining the countervailing consequences of paternal incarceration for parenting. National Center for Family and Marriage Research Working Paper Series. crcw.princeton.edu/workingpapers/WP12-06-FF.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 Thirteen (April 27): International perspectives on family policy**

- **Reading assignment:**
  o Bogenschneider, Chapter 5 “How do families support society and how do societies support families: A global view”

**Week Fourteen (May 4)**

- **No readings**
- **Student presentations, 5 minutes**
  o Presentations will be done in small groups; you only need to attend for your group’s presentation slot. Groups and presentation slots will be announced in advance.

**QUIZ #5**