

HS 400a: GREAT DEBATES IN SOCIAL POLICY

Spring 2017, meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 am – 12pm

Visiting Professor Deborah Stone

Office: Heller 346

Email: stone@brandeis.edu

Course Overview and Objectives

In this course, we engage the philosophical debates underlying the major questions of social policy by reading both classic and contemporary authors. The main objective is to reflect on the deeper value questions and philosophical assumptions that shape social policy. We will focus on six topics. They are divided somewhat arbitrarily, because as we'll see, they overlap and intersect.

1. Knowledge
2. Equality
3. Freedom
4. Poverty
5. Race
6. Immigration

Apart from the substantive content, the course also has pedagogical objectives:

To strengthen your critical reading skills, meaning the ability to identify and re-state an author's argument; analyze how he or she goes about substantiating the argument; and recognize and analyze the rhetorical devices an author uses to be persuasive.

To strengthen your writing skills, meaning the ability to make an argument about a policy issue; to situate your argument in a larger theoretical and philosophical debate; and write clearly, engagingly and persuasively.

To strengthen your speaking and discussion skills, meaning the ability to present your ideas or question clearly; respond to questions; and advance group discussion by helping your classmates articulate their ideas more clearly through constructive questions and suggestions.

Statement on Integrity

Professional integrity is broader than academic integrity. In contrast to the prevailing norms in academia about researchers being "objective" and "unbiased," I think that most people do and ought to have moral commitments. We believe certain things are morally right or wrong and we organize our work and careers to act on our moral principles. In the policy world, we all aspire to use policy analysis and policy reform to make the world a better place, but each of us must think deeply about what we mean by "better." In some sense, this question is at the heart of every policy debate.

As researchers and policy analysts, we should not be hired guns. In selecting a thesis topic or a research question, or in deciding whether to accept a job or work on a policy project, we should first question the goals and premises of the work and ask whether they accord with our own moral values. Of course, anyone in public life will face “the problem of dirty hands,” as the philosopher Michael Walzer called it. We will have to make compromises with our moral principles, presumably because we think a particular compromise is the best outcome we can obtain under the circumstances. But, as my late friend and colleague Judy Layzer put it, “The point is to be *aware* when you are making compromises, not talk yourself into believing that you’re doing the right thing when you really know you’re compromising.” In short, it is not only permissible but desirable to have moral and ideological commitments and to let them inform your work.

Regarding behaviors that are often called “cheating” and “plagiarism”: The prevailing norms in academia forbid collaboration with others except when explicitly allowed by the instructor. “Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort” (Heller School template on academic integrity, 2015). That rule reflects the profoundly individualistic political culture of contemporary U.S. and is out of synch with the more group-based and cooperative cultures of the rest of the world, especially the developing world. *I encourage you to cooperate and collaborate*, to discuss, argue, critique, and *to help each other* develop your ideas. As in the standard university template, I expect you to write your own papers, but you don’t have to quote every word or phrase you heard from someone else, or provide a citation to commonly used phrases. I will post additional thoughts on the appropriate use of quotations on the course website.

Requirements

Class sessions

1. Be present! Do the readings. Start early, give yourself time to savor, ponder and analyze. Come prepared to teach the readings to your classmates and get their help understanding what puzzles you.
2. Attendance should be near perfect. If you have to miss a class, come late or leave early, please let me know in advance.
3. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations for a disability or other life circumstances that might interfere with your attendance, class participation or meeting deadlines. You can learn about the process for documenting disabilities and requesting accommodations through Heller School’s disabilities coordinator. (To be determined)
4. Devices: You are welcome to bring your laptops and tablets for note taking and referring to readings if you don’t use hard copies. Any other use (Web surfing and e-mail) is the height of rudeness. Should class discussion bring up a question about which

we want to seek information on the Web, we will ask someone to search. Otherwise, if I get an inkling that anyone is doing anything on their device but referring to assigned texts and taking notes, I'll put an end to in-class device use for everyone. Please keep your phones turned off and tucked away. (Exception: if you have some kind of family emergency and need to be accessible, you may keep your phone on vibrate, but please tell me before class.) In short, back to point #1: Be present and think of the common good.

Written Assignments

Three short (5-7 page) papers are due February 16, March 30, and May 1. Specific assignments are in the syllabus under the due date. The first two papers must be submitted to Latte by 9 am on the day they are due (meaning before class). The last paper is due May 1 by 5 pm. Late papers will be docked one letter grade, unless you have a medical excuse or emergency certified by a dean. Word to the wise: avoid downed internet connections and other troubles by getting your paper in the night before.

Please type your papers in 12-point font, double spaced (not 1 ½), with one-inch margins all around, and insert page numbers.

Please be sure to name your file with your last name rather than the course number or name, and don't forget to put your name on your papers.

Grading: Grades will be based roughly as follows:

Class participation:	25%
Three papers	25% each

When it comes to evaluating intellectual work, I don't put great stock in objectivity and numerical precision. I do put great stock in active, kind, cheerful and creative engagement in class sessions. I also put great stock in improvement over the course of the semester and so I weight later papers more heavily if they show growth.

Books Recommended for Purchase

We will be reading almost the entirety of these two books. I will put copies on reserve but you might want to have your own copy.

Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, Princeton University Press, 2001.

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, Nation Books, 2016

TOPICS, READINGS AND EXERCISES

Week 1 (Jan 19): Introduction

Jill Lepore, “Wars Within” *New Yorker*, Nov. 21, 2016.

Week 2 (Jan 26): Ways of Knowing

Memoir and Testimony

Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Introduction,” to the two slave narratives below, (Modern Library 2000): pp. xi –xvi.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (NY: Modern Library, 2000, orig. ed. 1845), chapters 1-3, pp. 17-36.

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (NY: Modern Library, 2000, orig. ed. 1861), chap. 11, pp. 179-84.

Observation and Interpretation

Richard Panek, *Seeing and Believing* (Penguin Books, 1998), chap. 2 “God’s Eye,” pp. 54-62—science as philosophy)

Giorgina Kleege, *Sight Unseen* (Yale University Press, 1999), chap. 1, read pp. 9-12 (up to paragraph that begins “In social situations....”), and pp. 21 (from paragraph that begins “The word *blind* . . . “ to end of chapter, p. 42.

Stories, Facts and Statistics

Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land* (New Press 2016), ch. 9 “The Deep Story” pp. 136-152.

Jill Lepore, “After the Fact,” *New Yorker*, March 21, 2016, pp. 91-94.

Deborah Stone, “Quantitative Analysis as Narrative,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Interpretive Political Science* eds. R.A.W. Rhodes and Mark Bevir (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 157-170.

Week 3: Feb 2 Knowledge for Policy Making

James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, Introduction and ch. 1 pp. 1-52 [skip p. 36 from section called “The Code Rural that Almost Was” to p.44 (start again at “The Cadastral Map as Objective Information”). **Note:** the terms “cadastral and cadastral map” come up early but are not defined until p. 36. Jump to there to find the definition when you need it—or look it up.)

Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge* (Princeton University Press, 2001), Introduction, pp. 3-22; Chapter 1 “Origins,” pp. 1 – 54; and Chap. 7 “Fighting Poverty with Knowledge,”

pp. 166-95. We will read most of this book later in the two sessions devoted to poverty, but read these chapters now because they exemplify the “high modernist” approach to policy planning that Scott describes.

Week 4 (Feb 9): Equality—Liberal Approaches, or Inequality in the Distribution of Things

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books, 1983) chap. 1 “Complex Equality” pp. 3-30.

Jill Lepore, “Richer and Poorer: Accounting for Inequality,” *New Yorker*, Mar. 16, 2015.

Anthony B. Atkinson, *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* (Harvard University Press, 2015), Introduction and Chap. 1, pp. 9-45.

Week 5 (Feb 16): Equality—The Deep Story, or Inequality of People

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning* (Nation Books, 2016), Prologue and Part I “Cotton Mather” and Part II “Thomas Jefferson,” pp. 1-158

PAPER #1 DUE FEBRUARY 16 BY 9:00 AM –SUBMIT ON LATTE

Paper Topic: [I may alter and refine this assignment closer to the due date, but here is the gist.] Although Kendi’s chapters on early American history seem to be about events entirely different from today’s concerns, use what you know of his approach so far to imagine what he would say about how each of the authors in Week 4 conceptualizes equality.

Feb 23 No class--VACATION WEEK

Week 6 (Mar 2): Freedom—Liberal Approaches

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* chapters 4 and 5.

Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (University of Chicago Press:1962), Intro and chaps. 1-2, pp. 1-36. (The classic argument for free markets, written as a textbook for the general public, and the spark plug for neoliberalism.)

Deborah Stone, “How Market Ideology Guarantees Racial Inequality,” in James A. Morone and Lawrence B. Jacobs, eds. *Healthy, Wealthy and Fair* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 65-89.

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Random House, 1999), chap. 1 “The Perspective of Freedom,” pp. 13-44.

NOTE: READINGS FOR THIS WEEK CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Kent Greenfield, *The Myth of Choice* (Yale University Press, 2011), chap. 1 “Choices, Choices, Choices,” **only** pp. 14-25; chap. 5 “Choice and Power,” pp. 98-118.

Week 7 (Mar 9): Freedom—The Civil War and Emancipation

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning* (Nation Books, 2016), Part III, pp. 161-260

David Cole, “Equality and the Roberts Court: Four Decisions,” *New York Review of Books* Aug. 15, 2013.

Two more articles to be added

Week 8 (Mar 16): Poverty: Causal Theories and Ways of Studying It

Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, Introduction and chaps. 2-4, pp. 55-123; and chap. 8, pp.196-210.

Charles Murray, *Losing Ground*, chap. 12 “Incentives to Fail: Short Term Gains,” pp. 154-66.

Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Introduction, pp. 1-9, and Chap. 3 “Racial Attitudes, the Undeserving Poor, and Opposition to Welfare,” pp. 60-79.

Week 9 (March 23): What Should Be Done About Poverty? Views of Domestic Social Assistance

Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, chap 9 “The Poverty Research Industry,” (**this is us!**) pp. 213-41; chapters 10-11, pp.242-95.

Andrea Campbell, *Trapped in America’s Safety Net* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), prologue, pp. ix-x; and chap. 4 “How Means Tested Programs Keep People Poor,” pp. 57-70.

Joe Soss, "Lessons of Welfare," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 2. (Jun., 1999), pp. 363-380.

Week 10 (Mar 30): Racism and Race Policy: Assimilation, Accommodation, Leaving

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning* (Nation Books, 2016), Part IV W.E.B. DuBois pp. 263-377

Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," in *Uncle Tom's Children* (New York: HarperPerennial Classics, 2008, orig. 1945), pp. 1-15

Julie Messner and Edwom Martinez, "The Scars of Stop and Frisk," "op-doc" video, *New York Times* June 13, 2012, 6 minutes, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000001601732/the-scars-of-stop-and-frisk.html>

PAPER #2 DUE MARCH 30 BY 9:00 AM –SUBMIT ON LATTE

Paper Topic: [I may alter and refine this assignment closer to the due date, but here is the gist.]

Richard Wright and Tyquan Brehon (the subject of the video) were born nearly a century apart. Both are/were young black males, and both developed rules of thumb for surviving in America's racial order.

- 1) Write each of their sets of rules as though you were writing a guidebook for young blacks –"Do this, don't do that," etc.
- 2) Compare how the rules are the same and how they are different from the early twentieth century to the early 21st century.
- 3) Reading Imani imaginatively in the context of Richard Wright's essay, deduce the set of rule that W.E.B. Dubois would have Blacks obey to emancipate themselves.
- 4) Reading Imani imaginatively again, what might he (or you) say about "solutions" to poverty and economic inequality offered by the liberals and conservatives after 1960?

Week 11 (Apr 6): Racism and Race Policy: Civil Rights, Incarceration, Affirmative Action

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning* (Nation Books, 2016), Part V Angela Davis and Epilogue, pp. 381-455. (note this is not the entire Part V; we'll finish the book next week.)

Randall Kennedy, *For Discrimination: Race Affirmative Action and the Law* (Pantheon Books, 2013) Ch. 2 "The Affirmative Action Policy Debate: Key Arguments Pro and Con," pp. 78-146

Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land* (New Press, 2016), ch. 9 "The Deep Story" pp. 135-51 [review this chapter; we read it in Week 2]; and Ch. 15, "The Power Promise" pp. 221-33.

VACATION: No class April 13

Week 12 (April 20: Migration and Citizenship—Should national borders and citizenship be open to all comers? What policies do and should nations have regarding migrants?)

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning* (Nation Books, 2016), Part V Angela Davis and Epilogue, pp. 456-511

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso **revised edition** 1991); Introduction, excerpt from p. 5 bottom (paragraph that begins “In an anthropological spirit.”) to 7.

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books, 1983) chap. 2 “Membership,” pp. 31-63.

Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership*, pp. 9-16 and chap. 3 “The Difference that Alienage Makes,” pp. 37-76

Joseph Carens, “On Belonging,” *Boston Review* on line, June 2005
Available at <http://www.bostonreview.net/carens-on-belonging>

Nicholas Schmidle, “Ten Borders: One refugee’s epic journey from Syria,” *New Yorker* Oct. 26-2015, pp. 42-53.

Reading suggestion: compare the current arguments about “what to do with immigrants” with arguments among colonizers and abolitions about what to do with Blacks and slaves (in Imani Part III).

Week 13 (Apr 27):

No more reading assignments. In the last class we will catch our breath, synthesize the course, and make time for 5 minute discussions of your last paper.

PAPER #3 DUE MAY 1 BY 5:00 PM –SUBMIT ON LATTE