This course provides an overview of the welfare state in America and the nonprofit sector that is today woven into its fabric. We focus on a broad array of current programs and future challenges, but also put these into historical context. We examine how welfare state programs work at all levels of government, from the experiences of street-level bureaucrat in local welfare and child services offices to Medicare and Social Security policy at the federal level. We also examine today’s vibrant sectors of social entrepreneurship and community service.

Central to the functioning of the welfare state are nonprofit agencies, typically with funding from government and foundations, and we will thus also look at the various types of professionals, organizations, and programs that operate across the nonprofit sector. In addition, for-profit agencies also play a contracting role for various services (e.g. in welfare reform).

Welfare states in all Western countries are under great strain for many reasons (fiscal, demographic, organizational, political), and the United States is no exception. We will examine some of these strains in the context of peculiarities in the development of the American welfare state (compared to Europe), but also in terms of current political debates over entitlement, dependency, rights, and citizenship. Issues of gender, race, age, and immigration status will be central throughout. We will also look at the impact of climate change and the costs of adaptation on the future of welfare states.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to stay current with all the readings and to come to class prepared for discussion.

**ABSOLUTELY NO USE OF LAPTOPS OR CELL PHONES DURING CLASS**

All cellphones and laptops will be shut off and stored out of sight. Get a paper notebook for note taking, if you do not typically utilize one. (I will make an exception only if there is a dire emergency, such as a family member in surgery. You must inform me of such an emergency ahead of class.)
During the first half of the course, we will focus primarily on main topics in U.S. welfare state development. The midterm will be based on these readings and lectures. During the second half of the course, we will focus primarily on readings, student research, class presentations, and discussions of nonprofit and social entrepreneurial innovation. Each student will be responsible for researching one contemporary case, though presentations can be done in teams. I will talk about these and provide guidance in class. Everyone should set up times in office hours to discuss potential research cases. We will build upon a few core readings.

**Midterm essays: due Feb 26 (in class):** 10 pages, double-spaced, paginated, stapled (45%)

**Final research paper: April 28 (in class):** 10 pages (40%)

**Class participation:** 15% -- ongoing contributions to class discussions; individual and team presentations.

**Service Learning:** students have the option of combining the usual reading, presentations, and writing with internships and other forms of active civic engagement (e.g. with a nonprofit). Students must work out a specific agreement with Prof. Sirianni. Students can also use this course to help survey and decide upon summer internships.

*Disabled students requiring specific arrangements in completing course work should see the instructor.*

**Required readings:** Readings will be available at the bookstore, on reserve in the library, or on LATTE. Suggestions for “further reading” are NOT required or expected. They are there to guide research, should you choose to do further work on this topic, now or in your future studies.


Course topics, syllabus, requirements.

While the welfare state has had diverse historical, ideological, and institutional roots in Western Europe and the United States, its development has been linked to core questions of human needs, equality, positive liberty, social justice, and democracy. We look at these value debates in the context of various trajectories of welfare state programs and competing theories, and set the stage for understanding political controversies on entitlements and the future of the welfare state. Age, race, gender, geography in the development of the American welfare state.

Required reading:


For further reading and research (NOT required!):


January 20-22: Social Security in an Aging Society

Created in 1935, Social Security has been one of the foundational federal social welfare policies in the U.S. It has grown substantially over time in terms of value of benefits and categories of the workforce covered, as well as the propensity of political parties and interest groups to mobilize seniors for political participation (policy feedback effects). As is the case with public pensions in many other countries, Social Security also faces important challenges. What are the major options for reform?

Required reading:


Further reading:


January 27-Feb 3: Health Reform: Medicare, Medicaid, and Obamacare

While universal healthcare experienced repeated failures in the earlier twentieth century and then again under President Clinton, reform was secured and sustained through a variety of programs, most notably through Medicare, Medicaid, and community health centers (the latter the product of a grassroots movement now institutionalized as nonprofits). The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) finally has added institutional components that might make universal coverage nearly complete, although it faces persistent challenges. These various reforms are also entangled in for-profit and nonprofit systems of service delivery. We will examine these systems, their role in health reform, and debates over sustainability.

Required reading:

Daniel Callahan, Taming the Beloved Beast (Princeton UP, 2009), pages 171-218.

Further reading:
February 5-12: Welfare Reform

While public assistance to individuals and families has a long history in the U.S., Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) was only set in place at the federal level during the New Deal, though with much control at the local level. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) represented the major reform of the postwar era and in 1996 Congress replaced this with Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), institutionalizing work requirements and placing a lifetime limit on eligibility. We examine the major conundrums of welfare policy of recent decades, political conflicts, new forms of discipline, nonprofit and for-profit contracting, the dynamics of race and gender, and how welfare policy might be further reformed to reflect values of care, social justice, and democratic citizenship.

Required reading:


Reading for further research:

Jo Anne Schneider, Social Capital and Welfare Reform: Organizations, Congregations, and Communities (Columbia UP2006).


R. Kent Weaver, Ending Welfare as We Know It (Brookings Press 2000).


**February 17, 19: Winter Break, no classes**

**Midterm essays due: Feb 26, in class: 10 pages, double-spaced, paginated, stapled**

**February 24-26: Nonprofits in Human Services**

Nonprofits have become a pervasive presence in the delivery of services, including those once delivered by public authorities and those still funded with public revenues. We examine a broad array of nonprofits in services for children, families, disability, job training, rape crisis, battered women, alcohol and drugs, community health, and housing. The challenges of innovation, democratic citizenship and accountability in the contracting regime.

Required reading:

Patricia Yancey Martin, *Rape Work: Victims, Gender, and Emotions in Organization and Community Context* (Routledge 2005), chapter 5 (“Rape Crisis Centers as Unobtrusive Mobilizers”), pages 95-118.  

Further reading:

March 3-10: Youth Development and Engagement in Public, Nonprofit, and Community Service Fields

Youth development has shifted from a deficits model -- what is wrong with youth -- to positive youth development or community youth development. The latter asks what assets do youth have and need to enable them to become productive contributors to communities and to transform themselves in the process. Youth civic engagement had also become increasingly central to innovation. Local non-profit models, business partnerships, and federal programs, such as YouthBuild, City Year, AmeriCorps.

Required reading:


Further reading:


Barton Hirsch et al., After-School Centers and Youth Development: Case Studies of Success and Failure (Cambridge UP 2011).


Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer Appleton Gootman, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development* (National Academy Press 2002).


Melvin Delgado and Lee Staples, *Youth Organizing* (Oxford University, 2007).

YouthBuild USA. N.d. *Leadership Development at a Youthbuild Program*. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA.

**March 12-April 14: Social Entrepreneurship: Theory, Practice, Cases**

Social entrepreneurship has become a significant phenomenon among local innovators and nonprofit intermediary organizations, including ones that receive substantial funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service’s Social Innovation Fund, as well as through partnerships with business and other institutions. How has this field developed in recent years? What are seen as best practices? How can we evaluate the impact of “high-impact nonprofits” serving broad public purposes?

Student case study research and presentations. Many examples are presented in the required book by two leading practitioners (*Forces for Good*), upon which to build, and also in the recommended readings and contemporary journals. It is especially important that we meet in office hours and share potential cases over email. We can begin doing this earlier in the term as well.

Required reading:


Further reading:


April 15-22: Spring Break (no classes)

April 23-28: Integrating Insights from the Study of the Welfare State and Nonprofits

In these final classes, we review some of the lessons of welfare state and nonprofit development and ask questions about potential futures of institutions, innovations, political challenges, fiscal constraints, reform movements, as well as the potential impacts of climate change.

April 28: Final papers due in class: double-spaced, paginated, stapled.