

**University of Southern California
Davis School of Gerontology
Gero 540: Social Policy and Aging
Summer 2015**

Summer Session: May 20-June 30

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INTRODUCTION

The United States, like most industrialized countries, is an aging nation. Currently, more than 40 million people aged 65 and older live in America. In the coming decades, the older population is expected to grow dramatically, and by 2030 the population is expected to include 72+ million older adults. This demographic shift is unprecedented in human history. Policy makers faced with growing concern about containing the cost and scope of government must re-examine the government's social welfare role. They, and we as gerontologists, face tough questions: Given the current and changing political climate, what course should policy makers chart to meet the challenges of a society where large numbers of people are moving into old age and living long lives? How will their decisions affect entitlements for older adults now and in the future? What social, economic, political, and cultural factors will influence policymaking?

This course will address the impacts of sweeping national age-based and age-related policy and programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Americans with Disabilities Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Affordable Care Act. In addition, it will examine the implementation of these programs in state and local settings, where implications are tangible for vulnerable groups such as low-income and frail older people and their families. Policy challenges of issues such as Alzheimer's, long term care, housing, caregiving, transportation, nutrition, research funding, emergency management, and disease prevention will be discussed. Furthermore, this course will address how local governments can shape policy to respond to the needs of their own aging populations. Examination of these aging issues and policies as portrayed in current media and popular culture will reinforce course content. Although the focus is on the United States, there will be many opportunities for students to explore aging policies in international settings.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This online summer course is offered in a compressed 6 week format. Therefore, it is imperative that students keep on schedule with reading, watching online lectures and presentations, Blackboard discussions, assignments, and supplemental materials. Students can play the lectures at their convenience within a given time frame, but staying within the time frame for each subject and readings will be critical.

Using Blackboard® to access course materials

Blackboard is your online portal to this course, and daily access to the interface is necessary to be successful in the class. Instructor will make announcements, and post all course materials on Blackboard, including streamed/archived lectures, and course readings. In addition, you will use Blackboard to submit all papers and assignments. You can access Blackboard at <http://blackboard.usc.edu>, or by following the links leading from your “My USC” page. To log in, use your USC login and password, and choose the appropriate course.

Please direct any technology questions you may have regarding Blackboard to the technical support team (contact information is on Blackboard) or the technical assistant for the class, Jim Alejandre (jalejand@usc.edu).

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Learning objectives:

- Analyze policy processes, theories of policy, policy players, and roles of government at federal, state, and local levels
- Discuss social, economic, historical, legal and political contexts within which policies for an aging society exist and are proposed
- Describe key public programs and policies designed to assist older adults and their families, and the major problems and controversies that surround those policies
- Critically analyze and discuss readings in aging-policy literature, and apply in-class knowledge to current “real-life” situations

By the end of the course students are expected to be able to:

- Discuss the social, political, and economic implications of an aging society
- Describe the policy-making process in the United States, using examples from age-based and age-related legislation
- Describe the historical development of legislation and programs related to older adults
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and trade-offs inherent in current age-based policy
- Identify the main features of policies that affect the incomes, employment, housing, health, and long-term care of elders

READINGS AND MATERIALS

Many class readings are taken from academic journals, which will be made available electronically. In addition, there are three required books that you will need to purchase. These should be available at various online booksellers (e.g., Amazon.com) and in the USC Bookstore. Electronic versions of the books (e.g., Kindle) are also acceptable.

Required Textbooks:

Birkland, T. A. (2011). *An Introduction to the Policy Process (3rd Edition)*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Cox, C.B. (2015). *Social Policy for an Aging Society: A Human Rights Perspective*. New York: Springer Publishing.

Hudson, R. B. (Ed.). (2014) *The New Politics of Old Age Policy (3rd Edition)*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Required Supplemental Articles:

All readings that are not included in the textbooks will be made available on Blackboard each week, including various journal articles, policy briefs, and newspaper articles to supplement weekly chapters from textbooks. Do not be intimidated by a list of policy briefs under a week's readings. Many are very short and included because they are very informative. The Scholars Strategy Network (scholarsstrategynetwork.org) is a fantastic resource for explanatory policy briefs aimed and disseminating policy knowledge to the public.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT	% OF GRADE	DUE DATE All Dates are Los Angeles Time
Policy Brief Proposal	5%	June 3 at noon
Policy Brief	25%	June 24 at noon
Ethical Forum	15%	June 10 at noon
Policy Case Study (Get subject approved by May 27)	15%	June 17 at noon
Final Exam (Questions Published on June 24)	25%	Tuesday, June 30 at 5:00 pm
Online Class Participation (5 Posts in 5 weeks)	15%	May 27-June 30

POLICY BRIEF PROPOSAL—Due Wednesday, June 3 at 12:00 noon Los Angeles Time

Your proposal should be no more than 250 words in length (about 1 page) on a topic of your choice related to social policy and aging (see Policy Brief Guidelines, below). This assignment is worth 5% of your total grade.

POLICY BRIEF—Due Wednesday, June 24 at 12:00 noon Los Angeles Time

Policy Brief Guidelines: Assume that a policy leader (e.g., legislator, bureaucrat) has asked you to write a policy brief on a topic of relevance to GERO 540. Start thinking about your topic early in the summer term, and submit a 250-word proposal by June 3 to get feedback and approval from the instructor. The policy brief will be due on June 24. We will be reading several policy briefs as part of the course, so you will become more familiar with this approach.

Please review the Center for European Policy Studies' Guidelines at:

<http://www.ceps.eu/system/files/article/2010/12/Guide%20to%20writing%20CEPS%20Policy%20Brief.pdf>

The paper should be about 1500 words, and no more than 2000 words (between 6 to 8 double-spaced pages, including references). Papers that exceed the word limit will be marked down. Your brief must be typed, grammatically correct, clearly written, with no typographical or spelling errors. Use a 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on each side. The content (including cover page, abstract, citations, and references) must follow APA format (see the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* [6th Ed.] or

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/> for guidance).

This should be an original paper, and not a paper you are doing or have done for another class. It must be written in your own words. You should select a public policy or program or a policy issue in which you have a particular interest and that affects older people or an aging society.

Examples include: Medicare and long-term care; features of the Affordable Care Act; the Elder Economic Security Initiative; the Elder Justice Act; the Medicare Advantage Program; rationing of medical services for elderly; the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE); homelessness and the elderly; California State laws that affect (cut funding for) senior centers across the state; respite care for family caregivers; the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); state and federal policies that impact lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults; plans for deficit reduction and attempts to balance the federal budget, including the implications for Medicaid and so-called “entitlement programs”; and similar aging policy topics in other countries. Because space is limited, policy briefs should be well focused, and concisely written. You should avoid topics that are too broad in scope to be adequately covered in the space allotted. Narrow it down into a policy position on a major program such as these examples:

- Older Americans Act programs should target only low income groups.
- Change the Medicare eligibility age change to 67 (or higher)?
- Wealthy people who don't need Medicare should "give it back", making Medicare a need based program.
- The Affordable Care Act provide Medicare-style coverage for all ages.
- The states or the federal government should operate long term care insurance programs.
- Social Security should be dismantled and/or privatized.
- Government Pensions should be abandoned.
- Contributing to IRAs or Retirement Accounts be mandatory at all jobs?

This assignment is worth 25% of your total course grade.

Policy Brief Format: Drawing on several sources of information, including the assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, Internet resources and peer-reviewed academic journals, your policy brief should incorporate the following features:

1. **TITLE (15 words or fewer):** Your title should be a very short, succinct description of your policy brief
2. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (100 words or fewer):** Similar to an abstract, provide a short summary of what your policy brief contains—it should give your reader a sense for what is in your policy brief
3. **NATURE OF THE PROBLEM/ISSUE:** Most policies start out as attempts to solve problems or to address needs. Describe the problem or need. What is the root of the problem? (For example, if there are federal budget deficits, were they caused by excessive spending by Democrats on healthcare programs, Social Security, and federal aid programs that benefit the poor and unemployed? Were they caused by Republican sponsored tax cuts, unfunded defense spending increases, and an unfunded Medicare drug program that was written by pharmaceutical lobbyists? Or are they a result of a combination of these forces?)
4. **BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF POLICY:** What policy options have been set forth to address the problem? How has policy evolved to address the problem (if at all)?
5. **DESCRIPTION OF THOSE AFFECTED:** What are the human impacts of the problem (who does it affect and how)? Provide any quantitative analysis that is possible. How many people, in what categories (e.g., age, gender, low income, physical and cognitive capacity, living arrangements (e.g., alone, with family members, in nursing homes), are affected in what ways? What are the economic costs, and who pays what?
6. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE:** Looking forward, what policy innovations or changes are in order? What reforms are being discussed? Does your evaluation of the policy/program indicate that it should be eliminated, overhauled, fine-tuned, left as it is, or better financed? Will the issues driving your policy or program still be important for older adults in the future?

Grading Criteria for Policy Brief: Your paper will be graded on the following criteria:

- **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Is your paper comprehensive? Have you addressed the stated guidelines?
- **EXECUTION:** Is your paper well written, presentable, and well organized? Is it grammatically correct, with correct formatting, spelling, and punctuation?
- **DEMONSTRATED KNOWLEDGE/DOCUMENTATION:** Are you familiar with the topic? Have you included sufficient references listed in the reference section with appropriate citations—use parenthetical citations in APA style (for example, “Hudson, 2014”)—to support adequately any assertions you may have made? Do you appear to understand the concepts and cite the readings appropriately?
- **CRITICAL THOUGHT:** Is your analysis complete, with acknowledgements to both sides of the issue – pointing out the positive and negative outcomes that may be anticipated from any policy or program modification. Do you bring anything new or original to your discussion? Do you look at issues in a new light or suggest new ideas in your paper?

ETHICAL FORUM--Due Wednesday, June 10 at noon Los Angeles Time

This is worth 15% of your total course grade. Write a 500-750 word response, arguing a pro or con position about a policy stance based on an ethical choice. Compared to your policy brief, this assignment is more casual and conversational. Take a personal stance on the issue and write about it. The format should be a 2-3 page essay, which states your opinion in the first sentence, and then argues your points and reasoning. Refer to Achenbaum’s Value Constructs or “Policy Dilemmas” that apply to your argument to show why you are taking your position. (Public vs. Private; Expectation vs. Entitlement; Equity vs. Adequacy; Self-Reliance vs. Interdependence; Individual vs. Family; Work vs. Leisure; Tradition vs. Novelty). Cite references.

Some Examples of Forum Questions, to which you would argue PRO or CON:

- Should states restrict older drivers?
- Should aging prisoners be granted a “compassionate release” for medical treatment?
- Should 65 year old women be allowed to give birth and mother a child?
- Should more money be used to research childhood obesity or adult heart disease?
- Should older people be free to end their own lives when faced with terminal illness?
- Should cities require developers to build age-friendly features into their new and remodeled housing?
- Should school districts operate elderly meal programs at local public schools?
- Should the federal government stop paying, via Medicare or Medicaid, for “behavior” induced health problems of obese people and smokers?
- Should more funding be spent on caregivers or finding a cure for Alzheimer’s?

POLICY CASE STUDY USING A FILM CHARACTER—Due Wed., June 17 at noon LA Time

This is worth 15% of your course grade. Choose a full length (75-120+ minutes) feature or documentary film to watch or that you have watched previously. It is ok to use a character from a film you have already watched, but you need to revisit the issues presented in the film as they would pertain to aging policy. **You MUST get approval of the film and the character you will profile from the instructor by May 27.** After watching the film, write a 500-750 word case study on your chosen character in the film, highlighting the aging programs and policy issues as well as ethical dilemmas which apply or *could apply* to this person based on their demographic and geographic profile. Don't forget to address local policy issues as well federal issues, and state if applicable. Focus on issues such Medicare and Medical, Social Security, pensions, insurance, caregiving issues, chronic disease management, fall prevention, healthy aging and wellness programs, long term care, etc. For example, if you were to use Carl Frederickson from the movie *Up*, you would use something like this to get you started:

Carl Frederickson is a 80+ year old widow living in a single family home he shared with his wife for 60 years. Carl was Ellie's caregiver for several years before she died, and he has been grieving, depressed, and isolated since his wife Ellie died a year ago. They have no children, and he has few social contacts. He has no trouble with ADLs (Activities of Daily Living) or IADLs (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living). As a retired balloon salesman at the local zoo, Carl has a minimalistic pension package as well as Social Security and Medicare Part A. His house, which he refurbished with his wife Ellie, is paid for, and Carl wants to age in place. However, there are few neighborhood services available to him. While a lifetime of memories is contained there, his house has little monetary value as the city is trying to take it over in order to develop a shopping mall. Carl is eligible to enroll in Medicare Part B for a fee and could use HICAP counseling. In addition, he is a good candidate for services offered through the Older Americans Act, such as Case Management, Home Delivered Meals, Transportation, and Counseling. . . .

FINAL EXAM

The final exam is due **Tuesday, June 30 at 5:00 PM** Los Angeles/Pacific Time. Five or more exam questions covering topics addressed in online lectures, readings, assignments, and current events will be posted on Blackboard on **Wednesday, June 24** at noon. You will need to answer five questions and write 1-2 page (250-500 word) answers for each question and upload. You may consult readings, lectures, and other class material in answering your questions, but you will need to reference them. It is an open book test. Late submissions will not be accepted.

ONLINE CLASS PARTICIPATION

On May 27, June 3, 10, 17, and 24, the instructor will post a question on the Blackboard Discussion Board, where you will be asked to react to readings, current events, and recorded lectures in 100 words or less. You will earn 3 points for each week's response, and you are welcome to address other students' comments. You will have one week--until the following Wednesday at NOON--to post your comment and receive credit.

There will be five discussions, and therefore, this is worth 15% of your course grade. The final one is due *Tuesday*, June 30 at noon.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Note: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. More information can be found on the website:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY [!!VERY IMPORTANT!!]

Graders will strictly adhere to the University Student Conduct Codes® that establish expectations of academic honesty. This means that work of students should be submitted with the respect for intellectual property rights of others; the ideas and wordings of another writer must be acknowledged and appropriately cited. According to SCampus University Governance sections 11.00 and 11.11, plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of works by others. It includes:

- "The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether the material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;"
- "The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style;" and
- "Improper acknowledgement of sources in essays or papers." [1]
- Plagiarism is serious student misconduct. If such behavior is found, the instructor has the responsibility to report to the Office of Student Conduct and may apply appropriate sanctions to students who violate principles of academic integrity. See <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-universitystandards-and-appropriate-sanctions/> for more information.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 May 20

Introduction to the Course

Introductions, expectations, overview of course. Challenges of an aging society; diversity of older persons (race/ethnicity, gender, social and economic class); health and long-term care; income. An overview of policies/programs affecting elders. Discussion of American values. Defining power, influence, public policy, politics.

The Policy Process

Testing your aging policy IQ; public policy and the policy process; problem definition; policy formulation and agenda setting; policy adoption; implementation; evaluation and interpretation; policy design/redesign and policy tools. Comparing policy process models. Political theories and the politics of aging: interest groups, political advocacy, aging and voting behavior. Actors (insiders/outside); other processes/approaches; legislative process; roles of presidents; structure of courts.

Readings: Hudson, Chapters 1-3
Birkland, Chapters 1, 2, and 4-6

Policy Brief: Hinrichsen, G. A., Kietzman, K. G., Alkema, G. E., Bragg, E. J., Hensel, B. K., Miles, T. P., et al. (2010). Influencing public policy to improve the lives of older Americans. *The Gerontologist*, 50, 735-743.

Beland, D. (2013). The Politics of Obamacare, Social Security, and Medicare.
<http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/politics-obamacare-social-security-and-medicare>

Week 2 May 27

Discussion Board Question Posted, Respond by June 3 for 3 points

Get approval of your film and film character for Case Study by today.

Policy Approaches to Issues

The development of social policies on aging; historical antecedents; social movements and values; Aging as a 20th/21st century phenomenon; defining “aging policy”; basis for eligibility; age/need; age-based/age-related; policy tools and aging policy. Intergenerational politics in an aging society: dependency ratios, poverty rates, generational accounting, targeting scarce resources, intergenerational transfers.

Readings: Hudson, Chapter 5 & 8
Birkland, Chapter 9
Cox, Chapter 1

Policy Brief: Lynott, J., & Figueiredo, C. (2011). *How the travel patterns of older adults are changing: Highlights from the 2009 National Household Travel Survey* (Fact Sheet No. 218). Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute.

Income Security and Aging

Differences by age, race/ethnicity, and gender; poverty; Social Security (OASDI); reforming Social Security—privatization; Supplementary Security Income (SSI).

Readings: Hudson, Chapter 4 & 7

Cox, Chapter 3

Reno, How Social Security works

Policy Brief:

Shelton, A. (2013). *Social Security: Who's Counting on it?* AARP Public Policy Institute.

Marmor, T. (2014) How Social Insurance Protects Americans from Growing Economic Risks. <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/how-social-insurance-protects-americans-growing-economic-risks>

Marx Feree, M. (2012). Remaking Social Security as a Compact Across Generations to Support Family Care as Well as Retirement.

<http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/remaking-social-security-compact-across-generations-support-family-care-well-retirement>

Week 3 June 3

Policy Brief Proposal Due

Discussion Board Question Posted, Respond by June 10 for 3 points

Ageing Policies in a Federal System

Programs in the Federal System; state policies and intergovernmental relations; The Older Americans Act and the aging network, block grants: social services, community development; models of intergovernmental relations in aging policies, programs—the roles of the state and local government.

Readings: Hudson, Chapters 9 & 12

Cox, Chapter 2

Policy Brief: The National Council on Aging. (2011). *Older Americans Act reauthorization: Multipurpose senior centers for positive aging*. Washington, DC.

Lockhart, C. (2013). Why do some states support elders better than others?

<http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/why-do-some-us-states-support-elders-better-others>

Retirement, Employment and Aging

Retirement; labor force participation; trends in employment; ageism in employment; pensions; savings and IRAs; ERISA and the courts. Aging policy in the 21st century; aging policy as a global issue, as a generational issue; How much aging can we afford; how to pay; the value of aging and the aged in society.

Readings: Hudson, Chapter 6 & 13
Cox, Chapter 6

Policy Brief: Rix, S. (2013). *The Unemployment Situation: July 2013: Unemployment Drop Does Not Translate Into Employment Gain*. AARP Public Policy Institute.

Week 4 June 10

Ethical Forum Due

Discussion Board Question Posted, Respond by June 17 for 3 points

Health Care and Aging

Acute care and Medicare Parts A – D, financing, delivery; Medicare as national health insurance: aged and long-term disabled; prescription drug coverage; Medicare Modernization Act of 2003; Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010); Elder Justice and Nursing Home Transparency; Managed care (HMOs, PPOs, etc.); health care rationing.

Readings: Hudson, Chapter 10
Cox, Chapter 5

Ball, What Medicare's architects had in Mind

<http://theinsidereport.org/FamilyHeritage/Arthur%20Hess/Perceptions%20on%20Medicare.pdf>

Friedland, How Medicare works

Policy Brief:

Sommers, B. (2014). Health Reform So Far – Major Gains in Coverage and Access

Preventive Health and Aging

Strategies for preventing falls and elder abuse. Prevalence and causes of falls— multifactorial; public awareness campaigns; medical reimbursement; training and education.

Readings: Ganz, et al. It takes a village to prevent falls

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3590814/pdf/nihms232968.pdf>

Policy Brief: Nakhnikian, E. (2011). *No excuse for abuse*. New York, NY: Direct Care

<http://blog.directcarealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/No-Excuse-for-Abuse-DCA-policybrief-9.pdf>

Week 5 June 17

Film Character Case Study Due

Discussion Board Question Posted, Respond by June 24 for 3 points

Long-term Care and Caregiving

Long-term care—what is it; who provides it; who needs it; who pays for it; home and community-based services; continuum of care; integrating acute and long-term care; Medicaid. End of life care.

Readings: Hudson, Chapter 11

Cox, Chapter 7

Feder et al., (2000). Long-term care in the United States Long-term care in the United States: an overview. *Health Affairs*, 19, no.3 :40-56

<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/19/3/40.full.pdf>

Kane. R. (2000). Changing the image of long-term care. *Age and Ageing*, 29: 481-483.

<http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/content/29/6/481.full.pdf>

Policy Brief:

California's Coordinated Care Initiative: Background and Overview (SCAN Foundation) *Dual Eligibles and Integration Efforts* (SCAN Foundation)

http://www.thescanfoundation.org/sites/thescanfoundation.org/files/ca_coordinatedcare_initiative_sep2012_fs_0.pdf

Disability and Aging

Aging and disability policy. Demographics of disability; models of disability; the disability network; state/federal independent living programs. Partnerships and coalitions between aging and disability networks.

Readings: Hudson, Conclusion

Verbrugge & Yang, (2002). Aging with disability and Disability with Aging Journal of Disability Policy Studies Spring, 12: 253-267
<http://dps.sagepub.com.libproxy.usc.edu/content/12/4/253.full.pdf+html>

Schallock, (2004). The Emerging Disability Paradigm and Its Implications for Policy and Practice Journal of Disability Policy Studies Spring, 14: 204-215,

Policy Brief: Roehrig, C., et al. (2010). *Issue Paper #3: Aging, disability and earnings*

Week 6 June 24

Policy Brief Due

**Exam Questions Posted at noon. Open Book Test. References required.
Final Discussion Board Question Posted, Respond by June 30 for 3 points**

Housing Options and Aging

Overview of housing policy: federal, state, local. Aging in place (home equity and modifications); elder-friendly or livable communities, visitability, accessibility, universal design. Housing options and long-term care; housing policy issues—affordability, supportive, accessibility.

Readings:

Cox, Chapter 4

Pynoos et al., Aging in Place, Housing, and the law

Harrell, R. (2011). *Housing for Older Adults: The Impact of the Recession*. AARP Public Policy Institute. <http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/insight53.pdf>

Global Aging and The Future

Cox, Chapter 9 and 10

Green, C. and Lockhart. C (2013). How Women Legislators Help States Become More Supportive Of Older Citizens. <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/content/how-women-legislators-help-states-become-more-supportive-older-citizens>

Tuesday, June 30

Final Discussion Board Participation Due

Final Exam Due 5:00 PM Los Angeles/Pacific Time.