Course Goals

This course will address the intersection of developmental science and child and family social policy – both the use of developmental research to design policies, and the effects (intended or not) of policies on child development. The first goal of the course is to examine and discuss research, practice, and policy in regards to child health and development, parenting and families, education, and more, including debates about problem definition and the role of public policy, social indicators, stakeholders, research and evaluation, and ethics. Topics may include poverty and poverty-alleviation programs; early care and education; parental leave and work-family policies; home visiting; education and schools; early intervention and special education; and additional topics such as dissemination, media and communication, and advocacy. The second goal is for students to develop their ability to read, think, discuss, and write critically about findings, future directions, and implications. The third is for students to appreciate the relevance of developmental science to real life issues, identify signs or signals that could trigger public intervention, learn how to assess current programs and social policy in terms of how well they meet children’s developmental needs, and understand how broader contexts impact human development.

Course Prerequisites. PSYC 100 and at least one advanced 200-level course.

Course Readings

All readings will be available on Moodle. There is no textbook for this course. Readings will draw from the research literatures of developmental and child clinical psychology, education, health, and evaluation science, as well as a bit from the popular press. The course will follow a seminar/discussion format. Attendance and active participation at all class meetings is required and critical for a successful seminar course. Each week, students are expected to have read and thoughtfully analyzed all assigned readings prior to class (readings listed as “optional” are just that; they are intended for further reading at your discretion) and come prepared to discuss the methods, future directions, and implications.

Course Requirements. There will be no traditional exams in this course. The requirements include an individual presentation, a midterm paper, a final paper, and class participation. A brief description of each of these components is provided below.

- Class participation (including discussion questions) = 20%
- Individual presentation = 10%
- Midterm paper = 30%
- Final paper = 40%
Discussion questions. Deadlines for questions: By 9:00 am on the date assigned. You are asked to post 2 to 4 highlights and/or discussion questions in the appropriate folder in the Moodle at least six (6) weeks during the semester. These should be bullets or questions and will provide the basis for our discussions. Note that you are responsible for having read all of the non-optional readings every week even if you have not posted discussion highlights.

Presentation. Over the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for giving one 10 minute presentation on an article or evaluation report that you find that is related to the topic being covered that week. You will be required to summarize the hypotheses, methods, and findings, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the study, consider its broader theoretical implications and applications, and answer any questions that your fellow classmates may have about the study.

Midterm Paper. Deadline 3/22. A research paper drawing on empirical article(s) or report(s). Additional details will be provided in class.

Final Paper. Deadline 5/3. A proposal to evaluate a program, practice, or policy. Additional details will be provided in class.

Note: All written papers must be type-written, double-spaced pages using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins and in APA style. Papers must be handed in during class on the due dates listed. Late assignments will be docked one-half letter grade for each day late.

Course Grades: For fairness, all students are expected to complete course requirements according to the syllabus. Make-up work or extra credit assignments are not offered except in rare circumstances. Should problems arise, they are best addressed sooner rather than later by speaking with me. Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following course requirements and my overall impression of your participation in the course. First, your points will be totaled and an initial grade will be determined (95-100% = 4.0; 90-94% = 3.7; 87-89% = 3.3; 83-86% = 3.0; 80-82% = 2.7; 77-79% = 2.3; 73-76% = 2.0; 70-72% = 1.7; 67-69% = 1.3; 63-66% = 1.0; 60-62% = .7; 59% or below is a failing grade). Second, I will evaluate this initial grade in the context of my impression of your participation, including attendance patterns, in class participation and attitude, effort put forth, and whether or not your performance displays a pattern of improvement. Depending on my assessment of these factors, I may adjust your grade one step upward or downward. Participation factors may be especially influential when your point total is on the border between two grade levels.

Students with Disabilities

Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus available to you as a student, including the Office of Academic Resources (https://www.haverford.edu/oar/) and the Office of Access and Disabilities Services (https://www.haverford.edu/ads/). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, please contact Sherrie Borowsky, Coordinator of Accommodations, Office of Access and Disability Services at hc-ads@haverford.edu. If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (within the first two weeks if possible) with your verification letter.
Honor Code, Academic Integrity and Discipline

Students are held to the standards of responsibility, accountability, and academic integrity according to the Honor Code (http://honorcouncil.haverford.edu/the-code/). Academic integrity will be strictly enforced in this course. The responsibilities of both parts of the Honor Code, academic and social, are core sets of values that we as a community agree to uphold, as discussed here: https://blogs.haverford.edu/firstyear/2017/05/30/the-honor-code/

Class Policies, Rules of Etiquette, and Miscellaneous Comments

• In class, respect is a necessary ingredient for a successful experience. Please turn off all sound from cell phones and other electronic devices. During discussion, please always be mindful that everyone participates, divergent views are welcome, and interruption is not conducive to a good discussion.
• This syllabus may be revised as needed to ensure the educational quality and fairness of the course. If changes are made, a revised syllabus will be provided.
• It is my hope that everyone visits me during office hours at least once during the semester.

Topics, Weekly Schedule, and Reading List:

Note: The list below is subject to change.

1/25 (1) Introduction and Orientation to the Course

2/1 (2) Poverty, Risk, and Development

For a description of how poverty is measured and for data on trends in poverty in the U.S., see: https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html

For the most recent federal data on poverty rates see: https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-259.html

Optional: Full report
https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/demo/P60-259.pdf


Optional/For Further Reading:


2/8 (3) Brain Development


Optional/For Further Reading:

2/15 (4) Guest speaker. Center for Career & Professional Advising (CCPA)

2/22 (5) Maternal and Infant Health, Parental Leave, and Work-Family Policies


Optional/For Further Reading:


3/1 (6) Parents, Home Visiting


Optional/For Further Reading:


**3/8 (7) Early Care and Education - Child Development and Outcomes**


Financial Times: https://www.ft.com/content/ea35dbd6-b9a3-11e7-bff8-f9946607a6ba

Optional/For Further Reading:


3/15  NO MEETING – Spring Break

3/22 (8) Early Care and Education – Quality, Access, and Affordability – MIDTERM PAPER DUE


Optional/For Further Reading:


3/29 (9) Health in Context


Optional/For Further Reading:

4/5 (10) Education and Schools


Read about What Works Clearinghouse: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW

Optional/For Further Reading:


4/12 (11) Inclusion, Special Education and Early Intervention


Haverford alumnus article: http://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?i=460254&ver=html5#(%22issue_id%22:460254,%22page%22:34)

Optional/For Further Reading:


4/19 (12) Youth Development and Evaluation of Child and Youth Programs


Optional/For Further Reading:

4/26 (13) Research, Practice, and Policy


5/3 (14) Views, Policies, and the Public; Course wrap-up --- FINAL PAPERS DUE

Readings will be added with student input

