Course Description:

This course focuses on the connections between public policies and families and the values that enter into policy debates and family choices. It provides conceptual frameworks that can be used to identify and understand some of the influences underlying policy choices affecting families and also frameworks for evaluating the consequences of these choices for families of diverse structures, socio-economic statuses, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. We will apply this framework to topics such as maternity leave, child care, income assistance, and marriage promotion. We will compare U.S. policies to those of other industrialized countries, especially those in Italy. You will end the semester by conducting research on a social policy topic that we have not covered during the semester – from understanding the initial social problem all the way through to making a policy recommendation – to help you learn to explore independently a new topic. Central to the course are the intersections between families and governments via policy outputs, and the roles that citizens and family professionals can play in improving them.

Using UNICEF resources, located in Florence, Italy, we will delve into evidence-based approaches for ameliorating suffering in young families across the globe. Using Florence as a classroom, we will explore differences in family life between the U.S. and Italy as a means to understand the ways in which the state must respond to differing cultures and needs. At the Innocenti Museum, in the same building as UNICEF’s research offices, we will see an orphanage that began operations in 1445 and functioned as an orphanage and hospital until 1875, making it the oldest public institution in Italy. The building has been dedicated to the protection of children’s rights and education since that time, and provides a backdrop for an early understanding of ways to think about family policy.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend class each session, and expected to participate. This course has limited meeting times prior to our time abroad—it is during this time that we will set the stage for our travel and studies together. If you are unable to turn in an assignment, you will be asked to provide documentation of the extenuating circumstances that prevented timely completion of your work.

   During our week in Florence, we have a tremendous amount of ground to cover. You are expected to attend all scheduled activities, and be respectful of the people and places we visit. Students are required to attend our pre-travel meeting in which we will distribute and carefully review the plan for our trip.

2. Tolerance and Sensitivity: In this course, we will discuss sensitive topics that touch upon our values and some of the ideas that are central to our identity. We will not always be in agreement about these ideas, but we will always respect and do our best to learn
about each other with open minds. We will be considerate of differences in race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality and reserve judgment. We will treat each other with respect, and help everyone to feel comfortable sharing in the classroom environment. NO individual is expected to speak for or represent a group of people, but only to speak for themselves.

3. **Diversity**: CWRU aspires to be an inclusive environment, believing that the creative energy and variety of insights that result from diversity are a vital component of the intellectual rigor and social fabric of the university.

   As a scholarly community, Case Western Reserve is inclusive of people of all racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, national and international backgrounds, welcoming diversity of thought, pedagogy, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, political affiliation and disability. This classroom aims for a culture of inclusion that encourages relationships and interactions among people of different backgrounds, a culture that enhances human dignity, actively diminishes prejudice and discrimination and improves the quality of life for everyone in our community.

   To review policies related to diversity, please visit:


4. **Academic Integrity**: We will abide by University level policies regard academic integrity. To review these policies, please visit

   [http://studentaffairs.case.edu/groups/aiboard/policysummary.html](http://studentaffairs.case.edu/groups/aiboard/policysummary.html)

**Course Materials**:

The course will have 2 required texts in addition to readings available on canvas.


Due to the unique nature of this course, the following other materials are also required:

- Passport
- Airplane tickets (note- this is not included in the study abroad fee. Suggested flights will be provided)
Course Content:


In this section, we will consider the changing context of the family in both the US and Italy. We will ask the question, "What makes up a family?", and how do policy-makers aim to contribute to this definition? Who decides what the goals are for families—do federal and local laws value equal opportunity, gender equity, children’s rights, two-parent families, keeping mothers home with children, or other goals? What are the unforeseen consequences of specific value systems in governments, and which populations will benefit most?

Readings:

American families-


Italian families-


Comparative-

Boling, Chapter 1-2.

Gornick & Meyers, Chapters 1-2

www.leavenetwork.org: Country reports for USA and Italy

Meetings: 3 times during January to discuss readings & context

Part 2: International trends in Policy

In this section of the class, readings from scholars on the Welfare State, as well as databases of international policy will inform our understanding of how policy is developed currently and ways in which different countries have aimed to solve the problems of families in their country. We will discuss the particular issues nations might face, and how they frame these issues to be addressed by policy. Competing frameworks for understanding the operations of welfare states will be examined by considering scholars from comparative and feminist perspectives. We will also utilize UNICEF policy briefings, and programs that work in order to inform our understanding of varying policy needs across the globe.
Readings:

**The Welfare State**


Specific Policies that Impact Families:

Boling, Chapters 3, 4 & 6

Gornick & Meyers, TEXT, Chapters 3-5


Meetings: 4-5 times during February and March to discuss these issues

*One Two Hour Meeting in early March to discuss travel procedures and expectations*

**Part 3: Florence**

Over spring break, we will visit Florence, Italy. This city is the heart of the Renaissance and gives students the opportunity to see the place where our world began the transition to modernity. The art and architecture of the city will serve as a catalyst to our understanding of this transition, providing a framework to understand the importance of caring for others in a secular world. This is also the location of UNICEF Office of Research. We will have the opportunity to meet world experts in global family policy and see the Innocenti museum- located in a building that was a working orphanage for 400 years, and remains dedicated to the welfare of children.

**Airplane Reading:**

The Office of Research at Innocenti (UNICEF) publishes a number of discussion papers and podcasts on its website. As we get closer to our trip, our exact speakers will be determined, and papers authored by these speakers will be assigned. These papers can be found at: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/series/22/
Florence Itinerary (Tentative)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Sat 3/9)</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Adjustment to new time zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 (Sun 3/10)</td>
<td>Visit to Michaelangelo’s “David” at the Galleria Accademia, and the Duomo &amp; Baptistry</td>
<td>Cooking class to understand providing for families</td>
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<td>3 (Mon 3/11)</td>
<td>Initial visit to UNICEF’s policy center meeting with specialist on needs of European families, and tour of the working orphanage at the Innocenti in which it is located</td>
<td>Visit to Mercato Centrale to ‘go grocery shopping’ as a family in Europe might</td>
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<td>4 (Tue 3/12)</td>
<td>Return to UNICEF to meet with specialist on health policy for families</td>
<td>Visit to local hospital/ health clinic to understand how health care is provided</td>
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<td>5 (Wed 3/13)</td>
<td>Day trip to explore medieval city in Tuscany for understanding of change between current day and past society</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (Th 3/14)</td>
<td>Return to UNICEF to meet with specialist on education policy for families</td>
<td>Visit local schools in Florence</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (Fri 3/15)</td>
<td>Final visit to UNICEF to meet with specialist on developing nations</td>
<td>Visit Academia Europa (university) and meet with scholars there</td>
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<td>8 (Sat 3/16)</td>
<td>Visit Piazza Della Signora and Uffuizzi Galleria</td>
<td>Visit Boboli Gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 (Sun 3/17)</td>
<td>Return to Cleveland</td>
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Part 4: Conclusions

Students will return from our short term study abroad ready to talk about differences between Italian culture and American culture. We will explore which family-friendly policy might be more effective in each country, as well as the countries we were able to learn about at UNICEF. We will use our newfound knowledge to make policy recommendations for our own culture.

Readings:

Boling, Chapters 7-8.

Gornick & Meyers, Chapters 6-9


Meetings: 4 times in April and May
Grading: Students will be evaluated based on the following grading scheme (details below):

- 15%  Attendance and Participation
- 20%  Paper 1
- 30%  Journal Assignment
- 35%  Final Paper

Details of the specific assignments will be provided:

1. **Paper 1**: Prior to trip - 3 page brief report on one of the UNICEF target areas, specifying policy concerns
2. **Journal**: During trip - 9-10 page journal relating experiences in Florence to understanding the needs of families (1 page entries each day)
3. **Final Paper**: Following the trip - students will write a final (research) paper for the course that considers a specific policy initiative and its implications for families of diverse backgrounds. Students will use both evidence from the literature and from the Florence experience.

Potential Cross-listing:

Public Policy
Childhood studies minor
Women & Gender studies

Slash course for graduate students?

Potential core qualification:

Global and cultural diversity
Social Sciences