

## **SOCI 239: Comparative Family Policy**

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Spring 2019  
Office hours:  
Meeting times:  
Florence trip: SPRING BREAK

### **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:

<http://case.edu/diversity/university-policies/non-discrimination-policy/>

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>

### **Course Materials:**

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

Janet Gornick & Marcia Meyers. (2003). *Families that Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Patricia Boling (2015). *The Politics of Work Family Policies: Comparing Japan, France, Germany and the United States*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

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:**

### **Part 1: The Context- US and Italian Families: Differing Needs across Time**

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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-**

Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Laura Tach, Jennifer Sykes, and Kathryn Edin. 2016. A hand up for lower income families: EITC. In *Contexts*, 15 (2), 52-57.

Kathryn Edin & Maria Kefalas. 2005. *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Chapter 1.

#### **Italian families-**

Brilli Y., Daniela Boca D. and Pronzato C. (2016). Does childcare availability play a role in maternal employment and children’s development? Evidence from Italy. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 14 (1), 27-51.

Keuhne, T. (2017). *Family and Gender in Renaissance Italy*. Chapter 1.

#### **Comparative-**

Boling, Chapter 1-2.

Gornick & Meyers, Chapters 1-2

[www.leavenetwork.org](http://www.leavenetwork.org): Country reports for USA and Italy

***Meetings: 3 times during January to discuss readings & context***

### **Part 2: International trends in Policy**

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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**

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, Chapter 1.

Htun, M. & Weldon, S.L. (2015). Progressive policy change on women's economic and social rights. <https://malahtun.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/2014-htun-weldon-un-paper.pdf>

Orloff, Ann Shola (2009). Gendering the comparative analysis of welfare states: An unfinished agenda. *Sociological Theory*, 27 (3), 317-343.

### **Specific Policies that Impact Families:**

Boling, Chapters 3, 4 & 6

Gornick & Meyers, TEXT, Chapters 3-5

Budig, M.J., Misra, J., & Boeckmann, I. (2012). The Motherhood Penalty in Cross-National Perspective: The Importance of Work-Family Policies and Cultural Attitudes. *Social Policy*, 19 (2), 163-193. DOI: 10.1093/sp/jxs006.

Kmec, J.A. (2010). Are motherhood penalties and fatherhood bonuses warranted? Comparing pro-work behaviors and conditions of mothers, fathers, and non-parents. *Social Science Research*, 40, 444-459. DOI:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.11.006.

*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**

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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)

Day	Morning	Afternoon
1 (Sat 3/9)	Travel	Adjustment to new time zone
2 (Sun 3/10)	Visit to Michaelangelo's "David" at the Galleria Accademia, and the Duomo & Baptistery	Cooking class to understand providing for families
3 (Mon 3/11)	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	Visit to Mercato Centrale to 'go grocery shopping' as a family in Europe might
4 (Tue 3/12)	Return to UNICEF to meet with specialist on health policy for families	Visit to local hospital/ health clinic to understand how health care is provided
5 (Wed 3/13)	Day trip to explore medieval city in Tuscany for understanding of change between current day and past society	
6 (Th 3/14)	Return to UNICEF to meet with specialist on education policy for families	Visit local schools in Florence
7 (Fri 3/15)	Final visit to UNICEF to meet with specialist on developing nations	Visit Academia Europa (university) and meet with scholars there
8 (Sat 3/16)	Visit Piazza Della Signora and Uffizi Gallery	Visit Boboli Gardens
9 (Sun 3/17)	Return to Cleveland	

### Part 4: Conclusions

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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

Sainsbury, D. (1994). *Gender, Equality, and Welfare States. Chapter 8, Gender Reforms and their Impacts*, pp. 171-197. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

William Julius Wilson (2017). Why Sociologists Matter in the Welfare Reform Debate. *Contemporary Sociology*, 46(6), pp. 627 - 634

*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