

Case Western Reserve University

PUBLIC POLICY AND AGING

GERO 496, also
cross-listed as:
Anthropology 498;
Bioethics 496;
Epidemiology and
Biostatistics 408
History 480;
Nursing 479 & 579;
Political Science 480;
Public Health 408;
and Sociology 496.

Spring, 2009
Instructor:
Bob Binstock, Ph.D.

This course meets in the School of Nursing, Room NOA-250, 4:00-6:30 p.m., every Wednesday (with one exception) from January 14 through April 22, 2008. The exception is March 11, during the "Spring Break." The required readings are preassembled for students by the instructor and will be handed out in class.

The instructor is available to meet with students with disabilities to discuss academic accommodations. In addition, the University's Coordinator of Disability Services can be contacted at 368-5230.

The objectives of the course are to enable students to: (1) obtain an introductory sense of social aspects of aging that are relevant to public policy; (2) gain some familiarity with the underlying political processes through which U.S. public policies are adopted and implemented (and not adopted and implemented), and how they shape the substance of policies; (3) learn the political features, implications, and political contexts of the major policies affecting older persons in the United States; (4) have an understanding of the political behavior of older people and old-age-based interest groups, and their impact on politicians and public policy; and (5) become familiar with the major problems and challenges involving old-age policies in the twenty-first century, and the policy options and political issues involved in dealing with those challenges.

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam. There will not be a term paper. Although only the required readings for the course are listed below, most of these readings contain a wealth of literature references for students who wish to pursue selected topics in greater depth. In addition, the instructor will serve as a resource for additional literature as requested. Material presented in class sessions will complement the required readings. Some concepts and information will be introduced in class, only.

PART I: INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Required Reading (2 weeks)

“Preface to the Paperback Edition” (2008), and “Baby Boomers and the Merchants of Doom,” Ch. 1, pp. 1-23, in James H. Schulz and Robert H. Binstock, *Aging Nation: The Economics and Politics of Growing Older in America* (2006).

U.S. Administration on Aging, *A Profile of Older Americans: 2007*, 17 pp.

PART II: POLICIES ON AGING AND THE CONDITIONS THAT THEY ADDRESS

Required Reading (6 weeks)

Week 3

“The Search for Security with Dignity,” Ch. 3, pp. 43-63, in Schulz and Binstock.

“Dealing with Risk,” Ch. 4, pp. 65-86, in Schulz and Binstock.

Week 4

“The Company Pension: Altruism or Self-Interest?” Ch. 5, pp. 87-109, in Schulz and Binstock.

“The Pension Lottery: Personal Pension Accounts,” Ch. 6, pp. 111-135, in Schulz and Binstock.

Week 5

Hardy, Melissa, “Older Workers” (Chapter 12), in R.H. Binstock & L.K. George, eds., *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences*, 6th edition (San Diego: Elsevier, 2006), pp. 201-218.

Crown, William, “Economic Status of the Elderly” (Chapter 17), in Binstock & George, 5th edition (2001), pp. 352-368.

Week 6

Moon, Marilyn, “Organization and Financing of Health Care” (Chapter 21), in Binstock & George, 6th edition (2006), pp. 380-396.

Lieberman, Trudy, “Part D From Outer Space,” *The Nation*, January 3, 2006.

Colliver, Victoria, “Medicare Drug Plans Are Changing – and Costing More,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 8, 2007.

Hoffman, Jan, “Doggedly Persistent, Untying Medicare Knots for the Elderly,” *New York Times*, December 18, 2007.

Week 7

Stone, Robyn , “Emerging Issues in Long-Term Care,” (chapter 22) in Binstock & George, 6th edition (2006), pp. 397-418.

Cuellar, Alison Evans, & Wiener, Joshua, M., “Can Social Insurance for Long-Term Care Work?: The Experience of Germany,” *Health Affairs*, 19, No. 3 (2000), pp. 8-25.

Campbell, John Creighton, & Ikegami, Naoki, “Long-Term Care Insurance Comes to Japan,” *Health Affairs*, 19, No. 3 (2000), pp. 26-39.

Week 8

O’Shaughnessy, Carol V., “The Aging Services Network: Broad Mandate and Increasing Responsibilities,” *Public Policy and Aging Report*, 18, no. 3 (2008), pp. 1, & 3-18.

Taylor, Kimberly Hughes, “More of Detroit’s Aged Go Hungry as Economy Falters,” *The Detroit News*, January 5, 2009.

Marshall B. Kapp, “Aging and the Law,” (chapter 23) in Binstock & George, 6th edition, pp.417-433.

Greenhouse, Linda, “A Supreme Court Victory for Older Workers,” *New York Times*, June 30, 2008.

Duhigg, Charles, “Shielding Money Clashes with Elders’ Free Will,” *New York Times*, December 24, 2007, p. A1.

PART III: THE POLITICS OF POLICIES ON AGING

Required Reading (2 weeks)

Week 9

“A Gerontocracy? The Politics of Aging,” Ch. 9, pp. 201-222, in Schulz and Binstock.

Binstock, Robert H., "Older Voters and the 2004 Election," *The Gerontologist*, 46 (2006), pp. 382-384.

Schwartzman, Paul, “At 50, AARP Enters Its Golden Years,” *Washington Post*, September 4, 2008, p. C1.

Stark, Karl, “AARP IS Drug Plan Advocate, Marketer: Some See Conflict in Dual Role,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 12, 2007.

Capitol Hill Watch, "Sen. Grassley Questions AARP About Lack of Catastrophic Coverage in Health Plans," *Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report*, November 3, 2008.

Pear, Robert, "AARP Orders investigation Concerning Its Marketing," *New York Times*, November 19, 2008.

Cohn, Gary, and Preston Darrell, "AARP's Stealth Fees Often Sting Seniors With Costlier Insurance," *Bloomberg.com*, December 4, 2008.

Week 10

Iglehart, John K., "The New Medicare Prescription-Drug Benefit – A Pure Power Play," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 350 (2004), pp. 826-833.

Walker, Alan, "Aging and Politics: An International Perspective" (Chapter 19), in Binstock & George, 6th edition (2006), pp. 339-359.

PART IV: EMERGENT TRENDS AND ISSUES

Required Reading (4 weeks)

Week 11

"Framing Issues for an Aging Nation," Ch. 10, pp. 223-235 in Schulz and Binstock.

Wehner, Peter H., "Some Thoughts on Social Security," memorandum from the President's Director of Strategic Initiatives to conservative allies, January 3, 2005 (Retrieved January 7, 2005, from <<http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/004348.php>>

Krugman, Paul, "The Iceberg Cometh," *New York Times*, January 11, 2005, p. A27.

Pear, Robert, "In Ads, AARP Criticizes Plan on Privatizing: Campaign Focuses on Social Security," *New York Times*, December 30, 2004, p. A14.

Wall Street Journal editorial, "AARP's Tax Increase," January 5, 2005), p. A11.

Munnell, Alicia H., "A Bird's Eye View of the Social Security Debate," *Issue in Brief* No. 25 of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, December 2004.

Ball, Robert M., "The Social Security Protection Plan: How We Can Cope – calmly – with the System's Long-Term Shortfall," January, 2006.

Week 12

Alexander, Neil H., & Hawili, Rachel M., "The Private Sector: New Law Makes It Easier For Workers To Get Advice On 401(k)s," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January, 2, 2007.

Agnew, Julie R., Szykman, Lisa, Utkus, Stephen P., and Young, Jean A., “Do Financial Literacy and Mistrust Affect 401(k) Participation?” *Issue Brief No. 7-17*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, November, 2007.

Hilzenrath, David S., “Stock Losses Leave Pensions Underfunded by \$400 Billion,” *Washington Post*, January 7, 2009.

Aversa, Jeannine, “Feds Set Maximum Annual Benefit for Pension Plans,” *Houston Chronicle*, October 30, 2007.

Wallack, Todd, “Down Market Squeezes Pensions,” *Boston Globe*, October 26, 2008.

Walsh, Mary Williams, “U.S. Insurer of Pensions Has Lost \$82 Billion,” *New York Times*, October 23, 2008.

Munnell, Alicia H., Aubry, Jean-Pierre, and Muldoon, Dan, “The Financial Crisis and Private Defined Benefit Plans,” *Issue Brief 8-18*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, November, 2008.

Munnell, Alicia H., and Muldoon, Dan, “Are Retirement Savings Too Exposed to Market Risk?” *Issue Brief No. 8-16*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, October, 2008.

Week 13

Johnson, Richard W., “What Happens to Health Benefits After Retirement?” *Issue Brief*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, February 2007.

Pear, Robert, “U.S. Ruling Backs Benefit Cut at 65 in Retiree Plans,” *New York Times*, December 27, 2007, p. A1.

Milt Freudenheim, “Two Insurers Increase Bet on Medicare,” *New York Times*, December 5, 2007.

Lopert, Ruth, and Moon, Marilyn, “Toward a Rational, Value-Based Drug Benefit for Medicare,” *Health Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 6, 2007, pp. 1666-1673.

Lipman, Larry, “Is the U.S. ready for flood of long-term care costs?” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Dec. 3, 2007

Duhigg, Charles, “Scrutiny for Insurers of the Aged,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2007.

Savage, Terry, “Long-Term Care Insurance Rises: Hikes By 3 Top Firms Shaking Up Market,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 18, 2008.

Glickman, Howard, “The Role of Private Insurance in Financing Long-Term Care,” *Issue Brief No. 7-13*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, September, 2007.

Glickman, Howard, "How Can We Improve Long-Term Care Financing," *Issue Brief No. 8-8*, Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, June, 2008..

Week 14

Callahan, Daniel, "Setting Limits: A Response," *The Gerontologist*, 34 (1994), pp. 393-398.

Binstock, Robert H., "Age-Based Rationing of Health Care," in David Ekerdt, ed., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Aging* (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2003), pp. 24-28.

Mehlman, Maxwell J., Binstock, Robert H., Juengst, Eric T., Ponsaran, Roselle S., and Whitehouse, P.J., "Anti-Aging Medicine: Can Consumers Be Better Protected?" *The Gerontologist* (2004), Vol. 44, pp. 304-310.

Juengst, E.T., Binstock, R.H., Mehlman, M.J., & Post, S.G., "Antiaging Research and the Need for Public Dialogue," *Science*, vol. 299 (2003), P. 1323.