

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, 2008  
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 16 through April 23, 2008. The exception is March 12, 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)

“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: 2006*, 16 pp.

*MacArthur Foundation Proposal for Aging Society Network, August 30, 2007*, 59 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*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (San Diego: Elsevier, 2006), pp. 201-218.

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

**Week 6**

Moon, Marilyn, “Organization and Financing of Health Care” (Chapter 21), in Binstock & George, 6<sup>th</sup> 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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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**

U.S. Administration on Aging, *Older Americans Act: A Layman’s Guide*, (downloaded January 6, 2006).

Binstock, Robert H., "From the Great Society to the Aging Society -- 25 Years of the Older Americans Act, *Generations*, XV, no. 3 (1991), pp. 11-18.

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

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.

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

### **Week 10**

Rother, John, “Why Haven’t We Been More Successful Advocates for Elders?” *Generations*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2004), pp. 55-58.

Walker, Alan, "Aging and Politics: An International Perspective" (Chapter 19), in Binstock & George, 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

Mallaby, Sebastian, “A Fix for Social Security? How Personal Accounts Could Please Both Sides,” *Washington Post*, November 27, 2006, p. A19.

#### **Week 12**

Darlin, Damon, “On Making Enrollment in a 401(k) Automatic,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2006, p. B1.

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.

Walsh, Mary Williams, “Pension Fund Shortages Create Hard Choices,” *New York Times*, December 19, 2007.

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

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.

### **Week 13**

Editorial, "The High Cost of Health Care," *New York Times*, Nov. 25, 2007, p. A19.

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

Stark, Karl, "AARP is Drug Plan Advocate, Marketer," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 20, 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.

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.

*Clinton Proposes Agenda to Help Seniors and Their Families Afford Quality Long-Term Care*, campaign press release, December 8, 2007.

### **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 Eckerdt, 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.