Course Description

This course covers key aspects of social policy, including the contexts that shape policy, social actors that interact in the development of policy, and variations in policy making processes at the federal, state, and local levels. The historical context and subsequent development of key social policies that affect older Americans are reviewed, and current or recent developments in regard to policies benefiting the elderly population are discussed.

Learning Objectives

As a result of active participation in this class, students will demonstrate, through writing and discussion, knowledge and understanding of:

- policy and policy formation concerning older adults, at the local, state and national levels
- the historical developments of policy for older adults
- current major social, economic, and healthcare policies affecting older adults
- current trends in policies for the aging, including proposed changes
- how policy affects and is affected by diverse populations of elders
- cross-cultural and international policies concerning older people
- how policy contributes to evidence-based program planning

In addition, students will demonstrate:

- effective written and communication skills
- ability to describe, critique and analyze the literature on policy topics
- expert use of various informational resources to investigate policy issues in aging

Textbooks

Required

Recommended:
Galvan, J. L. (2012). Writing literature reviews (5th ed.). Pyrczak. (the 5th edition is just out if you prefer)

Required and recommended books are found at the UNC Bookstore www.unco.edu/bookstore/ or online at the usual places (used copies are fine as long as they are the correct edition). Additional readings are assigned for some units (see course schedule), and will be found online on the internet, online in journals available to you through the UNC library, or online reserve articles in PDF format through the UNC Library. Course units may also contain printed lectures, and audio/video links.
### Evaluation of Student Work (Grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Points</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% for Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Topic Blogs</td>
<td>9 @20</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Topic Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>380</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>&lt;60</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>342+</td>
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<tr>
<td>304-341</td>
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<tr>
<td>266-303</td>
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<tr>
<td>228-265</td>
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<td>&lt;227</td>
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### Assignments and Activities

1. **Assignments - Reading and Web:** The amount of reading for this class reflects the diversity of policy issues that affect older adults, their families, and society. The graduate level gerontology professional must develop understanding of these diverse areas, even though he or she may specialize in one specific area, such as housing or health care. For each unit on the course schedule, you must read the assigned chapters from our textbooks, as well as any additional readings and web work shown. Readings focus on particular policies and programs, as well as the more abstract and complex dimensions of policy-making. Students are expected to have completed all reading by the last day of each unit. Some units contain lecture materials in the form of PowerPoint presentations or other media. Student knowledge of readings will be demonstrated in class blogs and exams. The syllabus schedule shows the textbook, reserve, and online journal article readings; for the additional activities, see the online units on Blackboard.

2. **Exam 75 points** - There is one open-book exam, due on May 2. You have seven days to complete the exam, and the questions will be available through the Exam Questions link, on April 26. Upon completion, upload your exam by the due date through the Exam Upload link. All questions will be answered in essay format. The focus of your answers should be to use your own words to demonstrate knowledge about the topic, by integrating, synthesizing and critiquing information and research in the topic areas, based on course readings and assignments. You do not need to cite references for these exams.

3. **Discussion and Activities:** (9@20 points=180 points)

   For each unit there will be an interactive activity. Depending on the topic, these may take the form of answering instructor questions and engaging with each other about those questions in asynchronous posts. There may also be units where you are asked to find information on the web, post about what you find, and comment on what others have found. For example, during the 2nd two weeks of class this assignment will include finding information about social policy and aging, posting a blog entry about what you find, and responding to others with posted comments. We may also have video/audio opportunities to engage with each other. Instructions for each unit’s activities are found in each Blackboard unit folder. Below is the rubric for how activities are evaluated:
### Grading Rubric for GERO 635 Discussion and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>0 Points for Unit</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promptness &amp; Initiative</td>
<td>No evidence of activity, or only on last day of unit (will receive zero for unit)</td>
<td>Evidence of activity at least once per week <strong>by each Wednesday, (even in units with two weeks) and all activity requirements met by unit due date and time.</strong> (5 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worth 5 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of work</td>
<td>Does not follow instructions for activity and/or does not reflect understanding of the readings and other assignments. (0 points)</td>
<td>Follows instructions for activity and <em>Relates</em> to unit topics with demonstrated understanding. (5 points)</td>
<td>Follows instructions for activity and <em>Consistently relates</em> to unit topics with depth and detail, demonstrating understanding of the unit material. (7 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worth 7 pts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with Group</td>
<td>Does not follow activity instructions for engagement as described in the unit, e.g., fewer than number of required posts, lack of feedback or comments, etc. (0 Points)</td>
<td>Follows instructions for engagement as described in the unit but engagement is shallow, i.e., short statements and/or minimal information or ideas to which others may respond. (5 points)</td>
<td>Follows instructions for engagement as described in the unit and prompts further engagement about the topic. Takes initiative to address topic in more depth, with critique, suggestions, etc. (8 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worth 8 pts</td>
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</table>

4. **In-Depth Paper about a Policy Related Topic in Aging (125 points)**

The paper should focus on a current social problem or situation that relates to or has an effect on the older population, and can be addressed in the context of social policy. You may also choose to focus on a particular policy rather than an issue or problem, but it must be an aspect of policy not covered in depth in course units. Select a topic that is of particular interest to you, and focus on policy elements and implications.

You should choose a topic of interest to you, but make sure your focus is on the policy aspects of the topic (e.g., legislative action, implementation of a program or service based on policy, quality of services based on policy, theoretical arguments regarding policy about your topic, etc.). I have posted a list of suggested topics on the syllabus page on Blackboard, but these are just general ideas, and you do not need to choose one of them! Instructions for format and content are shown below:

**Format and Content:**
- Introduction to the topic or problem, and why it is important;
- Information from scholarly*, government, position, and/or practitioner publications reporting on the topic *i.e., Research findings on the impact of the problem and any existing policy or need for policy
- Discussion of the aging network and other “players” relevant to your topic, and how they influence policy; in other words, what part do politics play, if any?
- Strengths and weaknesses of current policy related to your topic (if no weaknesses, explain how the outcome is working well);
- Examples of how the policy has affected the everyday lives of older people;
- Conclude with any policy changes you recommend, including the creation of any new policy or substantial changes to current policy, and how you think that might be accomplished.
Topics and focus must be selected, and a proposal e-mailed to me by March 7. Please send me your topic choice by that date. For the proposal, send me a brief description of your topic, why it is important, and how it relates to social policy for older adults. I will respond with approval or suggestions for change.

Paper Elements
- 10-12 page paper (font size no greater than 12 or smaller than 11), not counting title and reference pages – points taken off for more pages.
- Use APA format for the entire paper, including title page, abstract, format of body, citations in text, and references. The basic format of your paper will be similar to a term-paper type literature review (see the start here link on BB for an example): Introduction, narrative of cited information that is relevant to your topic, conclusion, recommendations, and reference page.
- The reference list should use the complete reference for all articles, book chapters, etc. If the article, etc. was found online, cite the online information in APA format. Recent journal articles that you find online will include a DOI number in the reference citation. Use this when available. If not, use the APA format shown for citing the URL where you found the material, and the date it was retrieved.
- Where appropriate, include graphs, tables, and examples that support your position, or illustrate some aspect of the topic (e.g., research results, census tables, program evaluations, etc.). If you copy any graphics, be sure to include a reference citation.
- About Wikis – Do not cite any type of public access “Wiki” as a reference. If you use information found on these (or on Blogs, etc), there must be an appropriate reference (i.e., AARP, scholarly journal, book, etc.) cited there, which you’ll use on the reference list for your paper. You may only cite “opinion page” or blog web resources as examples of opinion, not fact.

Upload your paper by the due date (March 29), to the Policy Paper link on our course menu. I am the only person who will see your paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Rubric for the Policy Paper (125 points)</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format: (10 points)</strong></td>
<td>APA used, but many errors= 3</td>
<td>APA with few errors=7</td>
<td>Correct use of APA = 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction (15 points)</strong></td>
<td>Very brief introduction and/or little rationale for importance 0-9</td>
<td>Introduced with vague justification for importance 10-12</td>
<td>Introduced in detail, with in-depth justification for topic importance. 13-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarly review of topic and current policy (60 points)</strong></td>
<td>Main points identified; little use of scholarly or policy sources 0-39</td>
<td>Main points identified and briefly discussed; adequate use of scholarly and policy sources 40-45</td>
<td>Thorough and in-depth discussion of main points, and excellent use of scholarly and policy sources 46-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendations and Critique (conclusion) (25 points)</strong></td>
<td>Broad recommendations or critique stated, but not discussed 0-13</td>
<td>Recommendations and critique made and briefly discussed, but no suggestions for how to accomplish recommended action 14-19 points</td>
<td>Recommendations &amp; critique made and discussed with depth and detail, including suggestions for accomplishing recommended action 20-25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Spelling (15 points)</strong></td>
<td>Numerous errors 0-10</td>
<td>A few errors 11-12 points</td>
<td>No errors 15 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Schedule

Reading assignments are scheduled for each topic and should be used for blogs (and blog comments), exams, and to inform your policy paper, as outlined above. All readings, unit activities and webwork are required. **NOTE: Some web work, posted lectures, or other activities within a unit are not included on this syllabus, but must be accessed within the Blackboard unit for each topic.**

All articles or book chapters not found in our textbooks are found online through your own UNC library search, or posted on library online reserve. Some of these are journal articles and some are policy papers, i.e., on the AARP, or EBRI websites. If you are local, and prefer to go to the library rather than obtain articles online, UNC has most journals from which articles are selected. Here is a link with information on accessing online materials from off-campus: [http://library.unco.edu/services/distance.htm](http://library.unco.edu/services/distance.htm)

An important dimension of graduate education is to become familiar with current ways of obtaining information. In this class you'll have the opportunity to navigate the web to find information (including assigned readings), and how to use various online resources. There is a library link on our Blackboard supplement for this course. This link will take you to pages that explain how to find materials online, and how to connect with our librarians for information. There is also an information page for using the APA format and other help for enhancing your professional writing ability. Most UNC library features are available to students both on and off campus. From off campus, you will sign in to access the library, with your UNC user name and password.

The schedule for chapter, article and internet readings begins on the next page. These pages also show due dates for discussion, exams, and the policy paper. **For additional materials (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, links to audio or video files), please make sure to check in through the “Unit Links” on our course Blackboard course menu. Your blog links are there as well.**

**A note on the reading schedule format:** Reference citations on this list are APA except that I have added parenthetical information for how to find reserve or internet materials. I have also listed the readings in the order in which the topic may be best understood, although of course you may read them in any order (note that APA reference style for your papers should be alphabetical, by first author).

**Journal articles** listed will be found online through the UNC Library web page (suggestion: Search Summon by article name, or search using the journal name tab, or the doi number, and then obtain the correct issue – try each of these in turn if your first method doesn’t work).

**Online, UNC library reserve) =** means that I've copied an article or book chapter and posted it on our course reserves page, for you to access online: [http://library.unco.edu/finding/findreserves.htm](http://library.unco.edu/finding/findreserves.htm) These are in PDF format and you may need to flip them upright once downloaded, if you want to read online.

**internet) =** means that you should search for the document - or page – online, using a web search engine

Of course you may either print out the readings, or read them online (most are in PDF form and can be saved).

The reading and discussion schedule begins on the next page…
Unit 1: Introduction and Profiles of Aging

Unit 1  Jan 12-17
(one week)

Textbook Reading
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 1 – Aging Societies: The Setting for Aging Social Policy

Other Reading:


Recommendation
During this unit, go to the Library link on our course menu to become familiar with looking for resources online from the UNC Libraries, as well as links on the library page that can help graduate students in their scholarship. (note: you use your bearmail username and password to sign in off campus). The “Ask a Librarian” and “How do I” sections will also be helpful, especially as you learn APA style, and begin researching for your paper.

Activity = Discussion

Unit 2: The Aging Network: History, Philosophy, and the Older Americans Act

Unit 2  Jan 18-31
(two weeks)

The Aging Network: History, Philosophy and the Older American’s Act

Textbook Reading
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 2: Aging Social Policy

Other Reading:


See Blackboard unit 2 for web and other assignments

Activities: Web research, Discussion board, and a Blog (see Blackboard for details)
Unit 3: Retirement Income - Social Security and Pensions

Unit 3  February 1-14
(two weeks)

Text book Reading
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 3: Retirement Income Policies

Other Readings

Williamson, J. B. (2007). Social Security reform and responsibility across the generations: Framing the debate. In R. A. Pruchno & M. A. Smyer (Eds.), Challenges of an aging society: Ethical dilemmas, political issues (pp.311-331). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University. (online reserve through UNC Library)


Web: Go to the Employee Benefits Research Institute website http://www.ebri.org/research/?fa=genretire and do a search for “retirement confidence.” Read the 2014 report, and express your views in discussion. Also on the EBRI site, go to this link and read the 2013 report about older adult income: http://www.ebri.org/publications/ib/index.cfm?fa=ibDisp&content_id=5161

See Blackboard Unit 3 for more .web and other assignments

Activities: Web research, blog about the Social Security program, topic discussion
Unit 4: Economics of Aging: Work and Poverty

Unit 4: February 15-21
(one week)

Textbook Readings
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 4: Employment Policies

Other Readings


See Blackboard unit 4 for web and other assigned material

Activities: Discussion, PowerPoint presentations, Web links
Unit 5: Housing, Transportation, Energy and Community Support

Unit 5  February 22-28 (one week)

Textbook Reading
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 5: Housing Policy; and Chapter 8 Community Support Policies

Other Reading


See Blackboard Unit 5 for web and other assigned material

Activities: Discussion, web links
Unit 6: Health Care Policy

Unit 6
March 1-14
2 Weeks

(Reminder: Paper topic proposal due, March 7)

Textbook Readings
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 6: Health Care Policies

Other Readings


See Blackboard Unit 6 for web and other assigned material

Activities: Discussion, web links, PowerPoint presentations, ACA Blog

MARCH 15-22 Spring Break – No required assignments. May work ahead
Unit 7: Legal and Mental Health Policy

Unit 7  March 22 – April 4
(Two Weeks)

Textbook
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 7: Mental health policies

Other Readings


See Blackboard Unit 7 for web and other assigned material

Activities: Discussion, web links
Unit 8: Long-term Care, and Family Policy

Unit 8
April 5-18
(Two Weeks)

Textbook Reading
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 9: Family caregiving policies

Other Reading


See Blackboard Unit 8 for web and other assigned material

Activities: Discussion, Powerpoint lecture, web links
Unit 9: The Future

Unit 9  April 19-25  
(one week)

Textbook Readings  
Wacker & Roberto: Chapter 10: Aging Social Policy Challenges

Other Readings  


See Blackboard Unit 9 for web and other assignments

Activities: Discussion, web links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXAM</th>
<th>April 26-May 2</th>
<th>No assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam questions will be available through the EXAM QUESTIONS link on the course menu, by Saturday, April 25, at noon. The exam is due completed and uploaded through the EXAM UPLOAD link by 11PM, Saturday, May 2</td>
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</table>
UNC and Course Policies

The Freedom of an Online Class can be Tricky!

One of the advantages of taking an online class is that you can arrange your “class time” according to your own schedule. This means that you have more flexibility in your work, but also means that there is no reason for late or missing work. **If you know that you will be away or otherwise unable to complete your work by all due dates, please take this class at another time**

**Computer glitches** on your end are not an acceptable reason for not completing work on time. Remember that if you are local, you have access to the computer labs on campus. If you are not local, make sure that your computer is compatible. If something goes wrong on UNC’s end, you will not be penalized for that!

**Late work - is not accepted.** In an online class it is expected that students will plan their time to complete assignments by the due dates, except in cases of extreme emergency (as determined by myself, and with written documentation). Exams must be turned in by the due date and time indicated, **without exception.** Computer problems, crashes, etc. are not an acceptable reason for turning in late work.

**Extra Credit:** There are **no** extra credit assignments available for this class. Please focus your energy and efforts on the assigned activities. Also, because we are in an online format and you are in charge of when to complete activities before due dates, there should be no need to miss “class time.”

**Blackboard Announcements Page:** The announcements page is where I will put information that you need to know as it comes up during the course. Also, the Blackboard technicians will sometimes post news about the site - such as downtime. You should check this page often, even if you aren't planning to work on the course right then. Students are responsible for knowing information posted about the course.

**Disability Access**  Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

**Honor Code**  All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. All students are required to know and follow the university honor code, which you can find here: [http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/index.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/honor_code/index.html) UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. Cheating is the act of using or attempting to use, in examination or other academic work, material, information, or study aids which are not permitted by the instructor. Cheating includes, but is not limited to; having someone else do research, write papers, or take examinations; doing research, writing papers, or taking examinations for someone else. Prior approval of the instructor is required before submission of all or part of the same work as part of the academic work for more than one course.
PLAGIARISM

Any student who claims another’s work as his or her own will receive a zero on the assignment, and an F in the course.

Plagiarism: turning in work by someone else and claiming it as your own. This includes the use of or copies from any source (books, the web, articles, papers) presented as your own writing, without citing a reference for the real author. It also includes copying any resource (including your textbook or on the web) word for word, without using quotation marks and without citing the page and original author. Finally, plagiarism includes copying from or presenting another student’s work as your own. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the definition of plagiarism.

http://www.unco.edu/dos/plagiarism.htm

All written work submitted for this course is scanned for plagiarism, including exams. Please respect yourself and your time spent taking this class by doing your own work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Dates</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td>Jan 12-17</td>
<td>One week Reading, Activity <em>Introductions and Profiles of Aging</em> Jan. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td>Jan 18-Jan 31</td>
<td>Two weeks Reading, Activity <em>The Aging Network</em> Jan. 31</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3</strong></td>
<td>Feb 1 - 14</td>
<td>Two weeks Reading, Activity <em>Retirement Policy</em> Feb. 14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 4</strong></td>
<td>Feb 15-21</td>
<td>One week Reading, Activity <em>Economic Policy</em> Feb. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 5</strong></td>
<td>Feb 22-Feb 28</td>
<td>One week Reading, Activity <em>Housing, Transportation, Energy</em> Feb. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 6</strong></td>
<td>March 1-14</td>
<td>Two weeks Policy Paper Proposal Due March 7 Reading, Activity <em>Health Care Policy</em> March 7 March 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 15-22 Spring Break: No assignments or discussions required</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 7</strong></td>
<td>March 22-April 4</td>
<td>Two weeks Policy Paper Due Reading, Activity <em>Legal &amp; Mental Health Policy</em> March 29 April 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8</strong></td>
<td>April 5-18</td>
<td>Two weeks Reading, Activity <em>Long-term care, Community care &amp; Family</em> April 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 9</strong></td>
<td>April 19-25</td>
<td>One week Reading, Activity <em>The Future of Aging Policy</em> April 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXAM</strong></td>
<td>April 26-May 2</td>
<td>One week Questions available on BB April 26 May 2</td>
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Finals week May 4-8 : Exam Returned