



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Faculty of Arts

Department of Sociology

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

SOCI 401.54

Social Policy

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| • Fall 2018 | • Lectures: TR 11:00-12:15 | • ST 129 |
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Professor: Naomi Lightman

Office: SS 928

Email: naomi.lightman@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours: R: 12:30-1:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description

SOCI 401 focuses on collective and individual decision-making about resource allocation and financing at a broad societal level. Specifically, SOCI 401 explores the mechanisms and tools of transfer and redistribution that are central to all aspects of Canadian social policy. Students will become familiar with various theories of the welfare state, and how these impact social policy outcomes and social inequality at the federal and provincial levels.

In SOCI 401 we will use a structure designed to develop self-autonomy and critical thinking skills. The course builds off and integrates knowledge you have acquired throughout your degree by asking you to engage in a self-directed original group research project related to *an area of Canadian social policy, e.g. child care, elder care, higher education, (dis)ability, or indigenous inequality*. Students will join into groups of three or four and together will choose a specific research topic. The course will take a *problem-based learning approach* with the group research project being central to the course. Classes will be structured as follows:

Tuesdays will focus explicitly on the material in the textbook. Half of the class will be devoted to a formal lecture by the professor, and half will involve guided group discussion on the material read that week.

Thursdays will be a mix of workshops led by the professor on a skill that is directly relevant to your group project, group meetings with the professor, and self-directed group work. The five workshops are designed: (i) to be directly relevant to the stage of the research project groups are currently engaged

with, and (ii) to provide guidance on how to move forward and progress on the research project. Most Thursdays you will be given a minimum of 30 minutes to discuss within your groups progress made since your last meeting, issues arising or problems encountered while working on the project, as well as to develop a plan for moving forward. The professor will be available to help with questions or issues that arise during this time.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

At the end of SOCI 401 students will be able to:

- (1) Understand and engage with contemporary social policy issues in Canada;
- (2) Hone critical thinking and independence in analyzing a social policy issue of priority to you;
- (3) Improve skills related to writing to a non-academic audience;
- (4) Gain experience working within a group on an original self-directed research project; and
- (5) Participate in public sociology or sociology that engages with the broader public.

Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials

The course textbook has been selected to enhance your knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered in the course. We will draw on the textbook in lectures and in the assignments for this course. It is therefore very important to complete the required readings each week. Students are expected to have done the required readings *by the beginning of Tuesday's class* for each week as per the course schedule.

The required text is available at the university bookstore:

Lightman, Ernie and Lightman, Naomi. 2017. *Social Policy in Canada, 2nd Edition*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Methods of Evaluation

Grade Distribution

Class Participation	10%
Textbook Reflection & Discussant Role	16%
Group Meetings with Instructor	(2 x 2%) 4%
OpEd Assignment	10%
Individual Policy Solution	10%
Group Policy Report Draft	10%
Final Group Policy Report	25%
Take-Home Exam	15%

Class Participation

10% of your grade will be based on active participation. As this is an advanced undergraduate seminar course, students will be expected to contribute to class discussions and work cooperatively with group members. Students should not expect to get high marks if they do not participate in (as well as attend) class regularly.

Textbook Reflection & Discussion Facilitator Role (16%)

Every Tuesday there will be 3 or 4 people who are the designated discussion facilitators for that week. This role involves two parts: 1) You will write a 2 page (double-spaced) reflection on one of the Discussion Questions of your choosing in that week's chapter in the textbook, along with developing one unique sociologically-informed discussion question of your own related to the material in the chapter. This must be sent to me by the Monday prior to lecture. There is no way to make up these marks if you miss the deadline. 2) You will act as a discussant/facilitator during the class discussion related to that week's content, both providing opinions and raising questions to guide the conversation along with the professor. Please note that *active participation* is required. You will sign up for the week you will take on this role using a google spreadsheet available on D2L. You will be graded holistically for this component of your final grade.

Group Meetings with Instructor:

You will sign up for your group projects using a google spreadsheet available on D2L. Each group will be asked to meet with the professor at two different points in the semester. The first will be in Weeks 4 or 5 and the second will be in Weeks 8 or 9. These meetings will be held during class time and are an opportunity to talk through your project with the professor. The meetings are marked credit no credit.

OpEd Assignment (Oct. 4th, 2018):

Each student will individually submit an Op-ed (opinion editorial) that is to be between 750 and 1000 words. This Op-ed assignment will require you to take a stance on the issue your group has chosen and will challenge you to write a short, succinct, convincing piece.

Individual Policy Solution (Oct. 18th, 2018):

Each student will individually submit a policy solution that is to be 3-4 pages. This assignment asks you to determine one solution to the problem your group has identified. Specifically, you will be asked to outline the solution and to discuss its advantages and limitations. You should draw on material from the course textbook.

Final Group Policy Report and Draft (Due Nov. 20th and 29th respectively):

Each group will jointly author a policy report on a topic of their choice. The policy report will be 12-15 pages double spaced and must be well informed with both academic sources and non-academic sources. You will first submit a full rough draft that the professor will mark and discuss with you to help refine the report. The following week you will submit the final draft.

Take-Home Exam (Dec. 6th, 2018):

On the last day of class I will assign a take-home exam. Students will have 36 hours to complete the exam. The exam will be open book and is based on skills developed through the course. It will consist of one essay question in which you review and critically evaluate a policy report provided by the instructor.

Lecture notes

I will post PowerPoint slides on the course D2L for most of the class lectures. There are no lecture notes besides the PowerPoint slides, so if you miss class you'll need to get the additional lecture notes from another student.

Course Expectations:

This seminar is likely structured differently than other seminars you have encountered. It requires independent and group work and will undoubtedly involve some meetings with your group outside class time. I require group work because: (1) we know from employers that being able to work as part of a team is a valuable skill, (2) as individuals we stand to gain from incorporating others' voices and perspectives; and (3) it provides you a chance to learn from your peers. I have designed the course to make the group work go as smoothly as possible which includes providing class time for group meetings. Keep in mind that the group assignment is a twelve to fifteen double spaced page report. The short length of both individual and group assignments places emphasis on the quality of the ideas and writing which will be aided by working as a group with diverse voices, experiences, and opinions. With that being said, it is my expectation you approach the group work with an open mind and if this is something you are unsure of please talk to me as soon as possible.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	unsatisfactory performance

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date the test/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to their teaching assistant explaining the basis for reconsideration of their mark. The professor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

Email

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails violating customary email conventions will be ignored. All other emails will be answered within two business days. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

Course Schedule

Please note: Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Week 1 – Sept. 6. Course Introduction

Note: The first lecture will provide an overview of the course. Students are expected to have read the course syllabus; course policies, assignments and expectations will be reviewed only briefly, on a Q&A basis.

- No required reading

Week 2 – Sept. 11 & 13. Introducing Social Policy, Setting the Context

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 1 & Appendix 1
- *Workshop #1: Finding Your Voice, Understanding Bias*

Week 3 – Sept. 18 & 20. The Rise & Decline of the Welfare State in Canada

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 2
- *Workshop #2: Using CANSIM & the Aboriginal People's Survey*

Week 4 – Sept. 25 & 27. Defining Social Policy

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 3
- *Group meetings held this week*

Week 5 – Oct. 2 & 4. Social Policy & the Economic Market

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 4
- Guest Lecture: Profesor Emeritus Ernie Lightman
- *Group meetings held this week*
- Op-Ed Assignment is due in class on October 4th

Week 6 – Oct. 9. Allocating Benefits I: Privatization, Commercialization, and Alternate Service Delivery

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 5
- *Note: Class is cancelled on October 11th.*

Week 7 – Oct. 16 & 18. Allocating Benefits II: What is Provided and How?

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 6
- *Workshop #3: How to Write an Effective Policy Report*
- Individual Policy Solution assignment is due in class on Oct. 18th

Week 8 – Oct. 23 & 25. Allocating Benefits III: Who is the Recipient?

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 7
- *Workshop #4: Knowing Your Audience; Public Sociology*

Week 9 – Oct. 30 & Nov. 1. Paying Through Taxes

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 8
- *Group meetings held this week*

Week 10 – Nov. 6 & 8. Fees, Charges & Premiums.

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 9
- *Group meetings held this week*

NO CLASS Nov. 13 & 15 Due to Reading Week

Week 11 – Nov. 20 & 22. Volunteers, Charities, and Gambling

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 10
- *Workshop #5: How to Edit Social Policy Effectively*
- Group Policy Report Draft is due in class on Nov. 20th

Week 12 – Nov. 27. Globalization

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 11
- *Note: Class is cancelled on Nov. 29th*
- Group Policy Report is due online on Nov. 29th

Week 13 – Dec. 4. & Dec. 6 - Wrapping Up & Take-Home Exam.

- Lightman & Lightman, Chapter 12
- Take-home exam will be distributed on Dec. 6th during class time

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at the Professional Faculties Food Court. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Ethics Research

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

Deferrals

When possible, please provide advance notice if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar’s Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-forms>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It’s available at

https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Student Representation

The 2018-19 Students’ Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington (suvpaca@ucalgary.ca).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student’s Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)