

CHILDREN, SCIENCE, AND POLICY – PSYC 365
Georgetown University
Fall 2015

Class: Monday and Wednesday, 3:30-4:45pm in White-Gravenor 204

Professor: Anna D. Johnson

Office: White-Gravenor 301-D

Email: Anna.Johnson@georgetown.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm, or by appointment

Required texts:

Kotlowitz, Alex. (1992). *There Are No Children Here*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

All other readings are available on our course blog

(<https://blogs.common.georgetown.edu/psyc-365-fall2015/>) or via a direct link provided below.

Expectations:

1. Class participation. Students are expected to attend each class, to prepare for each class by doing the required reading, and to participate actively and insightfully in class discussion. Students are also required to post 2 discussion questions (reactions to or questions about the required readings) by 5pm on the day before each class meeting *in which a new topic has been introduced/new readings have been assigned* (in other words, not on days in which the topic is “continued” from the prior session, with no new readings assigned). Students will also help lead discussion on the day they submit their issue analysis and letter to the editor (details below). Students are expected to arrive for class on time, and to refrain from using cell phones during class. **Laptops are not permitted.** Class participation will make up 25% of your course grade.

2. Assignments. There will be three primary written assignments: an ethnography of a family (accounting for 15% of your course grade – 5% for the presentation and 10% for the written report); an issue analysis and letter to the editor (accounting for 20% of your course grade); and a final paper (30% of your course grade). As part of the final paper, you will give an oral presentation in one of the final class sessions; the presentation will account for an additional 10% of your course grade.

Assignment #1: Ethnography of a family

- Interview a working parent of a young child – the primary caregiver of a biological or adopted child between ages zero and five who also works outside their home on a full- or part-time basis, or is in a school or job-training program full-time. Present basic demographic and family information *without any identifying personal information*. Find out about how they juggle work/school and family (e.g., what happens if child is ill or child care is not available?), if they receive any types of public assistance and/or participate in any major child or family development programs. If the parent was working outside of the home prior to their child's birth, you can also ask about their parental leave and return to work. Analyze your subject's strengths, challenges, and the extent to which they are being well served by child and family policies
- Ethnographies are due in class on the day of your in-class presentation (sign-up sheets will be available during the 2nd class meeting)

Assignment #2: Issue analysis and letter to the editor

- Students are expected to keep up with child and family policy issues being debated or discussed in local, state, or federal government, or in businesses, advocacy groups, or non-profit organizations. Using daily newspapers or weekly news magazines, you will select an article (NOT a human interest or anecdotal story) related to one of the topics we cover during Session 11 or later (sign-up sheets will be available during a class session early in the semester)
- Each student will then prepare an issue analysis (3-4 pages) and letter to the editor (200 words) on the chosen article
- Specific instructions:
 - Find a recent article (published not before 2013) – see Professor for examples
 - Submit the article for approval at least 1 week before the date your topic is to be discussed – it will be shared with the class, and you will help lead discussion that day
 - In your analysis, reference a minimum of 2 course readings and 2 outside readings (peer-reviewed journal articles!)
 - Issue analysis should be 3-4 pages and must include:
 - Title and source of article
 - Copy of the article (for grading)
 - Brief summary of the article (1-2 paragraphs)
 - Issue analysis must address the following questions:
 - Does the article you selected talk about scientific evidence?
 - How well does it reflect the scientific evidence?
 - What are the implications of the article for child/family development/wellbeing?
 - Are there key points missing from the article that make it incomplete or unsatisfactory to you, or biased or inaccurate? What are they?

- Consider any relevant recurring themes we discuss in class (e.g., developmental perspective; selection bias; cost-benefit analysis; prevention versus intervention)
- Each student must also prepare a 200-word letter to the editor expressing your views
 - Briefly summarize what you learned from your issue analysis
 - Identify specific actions that can/should be taken to make improvement(s) in your policy issue area

Assignment #3: Final paper/project

- There will be a 10-15 page final paper due during exam week.
- Students will select a peer-reviewed, scientific journal article published in an academic journal that has an incomplete (in the eyes of the student, pending my approval) or non-existent “policy implications” section
- The article will be the starting point for your final project: it should be an article that identifies a developmental or developmentally-relevant research question (does X affect Y where X is not a policy per se, and Y is something related to child development)
- The paper will have 2 parts: (1) re-crafting of the policy implications section; (2) limitations, future directions, and research recommendations of the chosen study
- I will work closely with each student in the selection of the article and the outlining of the project. It is your responsibility to email/meet with me throughout the process
- The article will be due to me in early October; an annotated bibliography will be due to me in early November. Five percent of the 30% of your final grade for which this assignment counts, will be based on these components (their timeliness and quality)
- Final presentations in the last 4 class sessions will serve as a “dry run” of your paper, on which you will receive feedback to improve the final product
- More details will be discussed in class in the coming weeks

3. The honor system. As good scholars and citizens, we are all obligated to adhere to Georgetown’s honor system concerning academic integrity. Read and understand your responsibilities at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/>. We must and will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty.

Class schedule and assigned readings:

BACKGROUND

9/2 1. Introduction to the course

9/7 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

9/9 2. Children and policy – a starting point

Kotlowitz, Alex. (1992). *There Are No Children Here*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Read as much as you can (full book due on 9/16).

Zigler, E.F., & Hall, N.W. (2000). *Child Development and Social Policy*. New York: McGraw Hill. Chapter 1.

9/14 3. Poverty – what is it, how is it measured, and how do we think about it?

Ellwood, David T. (1988). Chapter 2: Values and the helping conundrum. In *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family* (pp.14-44). New York: Basic Books.

Heclo, H. (1997). Values underpinning poverty programs for children. *Future of Children*, 7, 141-148.

Recommended:

Fisher, Gordon M. (1992). The development and history of the poverty thresholds. *Social Security Bulletin*, 55, 3-14.

POPULAR NEWS:

Minimum wage living calculator:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/02/09/opinion/minimum-wage.html>

Values around helping the “deserving” versus “undeserving” poor

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/business/economy/aid-to-needy-often-excludes-the-poorest-in-america.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=photo-spot-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0

9/16 4. Why does poverty matter? The negative effects of growing up poor

Kotlowitz (entire book).

Hair, N.L., Hanson, J.L., Wolfe, B.L., & Pollak, S.D. (2015). Association of child poverty, brain development, and academic achievement. *JAMA Pediatrics*. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.1475

Recommended:

Evans, G.W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 59, 77-92.

POPULAR NEWS:

How stress and trauma get “under the skin” to affect child development

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/toxic-stress-poverty-hurt-developing-brain/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/opinion/brooks-the-psych-approach.html>

9/21 5. How does poverty matter? The negative effects of growing up poor

Duncan, G.J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (1997). *Future of Children*, 7, 55-71.

Yeung, J., Linver, M.R., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2002). How money matters for young children’s development: Parental investment and family processes. *Child Development*, 73, 1861-1869.

Continued discussion of Kotlowitz.

9/23 6. How does research get into policymaking? The guts of the policy process

Birkland, T.A. (2001). An introduction to the policy process: Theories, concepts, and models of public policymaking. Chapters. 2, 3, and 4. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Huston, A.C. (2005). Connecting the science of child development to public policy. *Social Policy Report*, Vol. XIX, Number 4. Washington, DC: Society for Research in Child Development.

Recommended:

Shonkoff, J.P., & Bales, S.N. (2011). Science does not speak for itself: Translating child development research for the public and its policymakers. *Child Development*, 82, 17-32.

9/28 7. How does research get into policymaking? Case studies

Case study 1: WIC

National Research Council (1982). *Making Policies for Children: A Study of the Federal Process*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

- Chapter 3: Components of the policy formation process (pp. 38-57)
- Chapter 4: A policy framework: Three levels of decision-making (pp. 58-71)
- WIC Case Study (pp. 85-148)

Case study 2: child care subsidies

Johnson, A.D., Ryan, R.M., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2012). Child care subsidies: Do they impact the quality of care children experience? *Child Development*, 83, 1444-1461.

Johnson, A.D. Public summary of “Child care subsidies: Do they impact the quality of care children experience?” (and related press release)

Testimony of Linda K. Smith, Senate Subcommittee Hearing, July 26, 2012
(Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Subcommittee on Children and Families)

<http://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=9fb5f311-5056-9502-5d55-a235b2713708>

9/30 8. Ethnography presentations and discussion, I

10/5 9. Ethnography presentations and discussion, II

10/7 10. Ethnography presentations and discussion, III

PROBLEMS, POLICY SOLUTIONS, and CHILD DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

10/12 NO CLASS – COLUMBUS DAY

**10/14 11. Problem: Income poverty
Solution: Welfare reform**

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) overview (2012)

<http://www.cbpp.org/files/7-22-10tanf2.pdf>

selections from Jason DeParle, *American Dream*. [specific pages to be assigned]

Moore, K.A. & Zaslow, M.J. (2004). How welfare reform might affect children: Updating the conceptual model. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

Morris, P.A., Gennetian, L.A., & Duncan, G.J. (2005). Effects of welfare and employment policies on young children: New findings on policy experiments conducted in the early 1990s. *Social Policy Report*.

POPULAR NEWS:

Welfare reform today

<http://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/gutting-welfare/>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/long-term-thinking-for-welfare/2015/08/02/99890ac2-3558-11e5-94ce-834ad8f5c50e_story.html

10/19 12. Income poverty and welfare reform, continued

Brooks-Gunn, J., Han, W.J., & Waldfogel, J. (2010). First year maternal employment and child development in the first 7 years. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 75, 1-147.

*Abstract only.

Coley, R.L., & Lombardi, C. M. (2013). Does maternal employment following childbirth support or inhibit low-income children's long-term development? *Child Development*, 84, 178-197.

**10/21 13. Problem: Work/family balance
Solution: Policies to support the working poor – parental leave**

Berger, L.M., Hill, J., & Waldfogel, J. (2005). Maternity leave, early maternal employment, and child health and development in the US. *The Economic Journal*, 115, F29-F47.

Chatterji, P., & Markowitz, S. (2012). Family leave after childbirth and the mental health of new mothers. *Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics*, 15, 61-76.

Waldfogel, J. (2006). Early childhood policy: A comparative perspective. In K. McCartney & D. Phillips (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Early Childhood Development* (pgs. 576-594). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

*Read section on Parental Leave Policy only

Recommended:

Zigler and Hall, Chapter 4 (only through page 66)

POPULAR NEWS:

Economic benefits of paid parental leave

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/upshot/the-economic-benefits-of-paid-parental-leave.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Moth-Visible&module=inside-nyt-region®ion=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&_r=0&abt=0002&abg=1

10/26 14. Other Policies to support the working poor – EITC and minimum wage

Dahl, G.B., & Lochner, L. (2012). The impact of family income on child achievement: Evidence from the Earned Income Tax Credit. *American Economic Review*, 102, 1927-1956.

Sawhill, I. (Ed). (2003). One percent for the kids. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Chapter 3.

POPULAR NEWS:

Just getting by:

<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/with-three-adults-two-jobs-and-one-baby-a-family-is-barely-getting-by/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2014/10/27/us/ap-us-the-final-shift.html>

selections from Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.
[specific pages to be assigned]

Recommended:

Beverly, S. (2002). What social workers need to know about the Earned Income Tax Credit. *Social Work*, 47, 259-266.

10/28 15. Problem: Poverty's deleterious effects on very young children Solution: Early intervention

Deming, D. (2009). Early childhood intervention and life-cycle skill development: Evidence from Head Start. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 111-134.

Ramey, S.L., & Ramey, C.T. (2000). Early childhood experiences and developmental competence. In *Securing the Future: Investing in Children from Birth to College*, S. Danziger & J. Waldfogel (Eds.). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

POPULAR NEWS:

Debate about efficacy of early intervention

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/22/opinion/sunday/sunday-dialogue-lifting-kids-out-of-poverty.html>

**11/2 16. Problem: unaffordable early care and education
Solution: Head Start (again, briefly); public pre-k; child care subsidies**

Re-skim Deming, 2009 (from 10/20 session)

Gormley, W.T., Phillips, D.A. & Gayer, T. (2008). Preschool programs can boost school readiness. *Science*, 320, 1723–1724. doi:10.1126/science.1156019

Johnson, A.D., Martin, A., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2013). Child care subsidies and school readiness in kindergarten. *Child Development*, DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12073.

POPULAR NEWS:

Quality preschool

<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/17/quality-preschool-is-the-most-cost-effective-educational-intervention/>

Preschool for All

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obama-unveils-1b-boost-preschools-including-55-million/story?id=27470640>

11/4 17. Child care and early education, continued

**11/9 18. Problem: Poor nutrition
Solution: Food and nutrition programs – WIC and SNAP**

Required:

Ashiabi, G.S., & O’Neal, K.K. (2008). A framework for understanding the association between food insecurity and children’s developmental outcomes. *Child Development Perspectives*, 2, 71-77.

Lee, B.J. & Mackey-Bilaver, L. (2007). Effects of WIC and Food Stamp participation on child outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29, 501-517.

Recommended:

Bronte-Tinkew, J., Zaslow, M., Capps, R., Horowitz, A., & McNamara, M. (2007). Food insecurity works through depression, parenting, and infant feeding to influence overweight and health in toddlers. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 137, 2160-2165.

Gershoff, E.T., Aber, J.L., Raver, C.C., & Lennon, M.C. (2007). Income is not enough: Incorporating material hardship into models of income associations with parenting and child development. *Child Development*, 78, 70-95.

POPULAR NEWS:

Closing the “broccoli gap”

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/05/closing-the-broccoli-gap/>

**11/11 19. Problem: Unaffordable housing and unsafe neighborhoods
Solution: Public housing and housing vouchers**

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2009). *Introduction to the housing voucher program*. Washington, DC: Author. <http://www.cbpp.org/files/5-15-03hous.pdf>

Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence upon child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 309-337.

Ziol-Guest, K.M., & McKenna, C.C. (2013). Early childhood housing instability and school readiness. *Child Development*, 1-11. DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12105.

*Also, think back to Kotlowitz

Recommended:

Sawhill, Chapter 8

POPULAR NEWS:

Neighborhood centers

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/09/opinion/sunday/david-l-kirp-what-do-the-poor-need-try-asking-them.html>

Massive housing experiment finds those who moved to less-impooverished neighborhoods were happier

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/health-wellness/2012/09/20/massive-housing-experiment-finds-those-who-moved-less-impooverished-neighborhoods-were-happier/VJrJ04voNcQ895eA1v9C6I/story.html>

**11/16 20. Problem: Unaffordable health care
Solution: Medicaid and SCHIP/CHIP**

Finkelstein, A., et al. (2011). The Oregon health insurance experiment: Evidence from the first year. *National Bureau of Economic Research working paper 17190*.

Mann, Cindy, Rowland, Diane & Garfield, Rachel. (2003). Historical overview of children’s health care coverage. *The Future of Children*, 13(1), 31-53.

http://www.futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/13_01_02.pdf

Morrissey, T. (2012). Health reform and child health: Progress, cautions, and future directions. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6, 199-205.

RISKY DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS AND POLICIES TO SUPPORT THEM

11/18 21. Single mothers, “fragile families”, and marriage as a policy issue

~~CHOOSE ANY 3~~

Carlson, M., McLanahan, S., England, P., & Devaney, B. (2005). What we know about unmarried parents: Implications for building strong families programs. Washington, DC: Mathematica.

McLanahan, S., Garfinkel, I., Mincy, R.B., & Donahue, E. (2010). Introducing the issue. *The Future of Children*, 20, 3-16.

Nock, S. (2005). Marriage as a public issue. *The Future of Children*, 15, 13-32.

Parke, Mary. (2003). *Are married parents really better for children? What research says about the effects of family structure on child well-being*. (Brief # 03-24). Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy. http://www.clasp.org/publications/marriage_brief3_annotated.pdf

Waldfogel, J., Craigie, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2010). Fragile families and child wellbeing. *The Future of Children*, 20(2), 87-112.

POPULAR NEWS:

In defense of single motherhood

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/12/opinion/sunday/in-defense-of-single-motherhood.html?ref=topics>

Differences in divorce rates by SES

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/fashion/weddings/falling-marriage-rates-reveal-economic-fault-lines.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=mini-moth®ion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below&r=0>

The divorce surge is over, but the myth lives on

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/02/upshot/the-divorce-surge-is-over-but-the-myth-lives-on.html>

11/23 22. Immigrant children

From the *Future of Children*, 21(1), 2011:

http://futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/journal_details/index.xml?journalid=74
Crosnoe & Lopez-Turley (2011)

Tienda & Haskins (2011)

Karoly & Gonzalez (2011)

POPULAR NEWS:

Minorities will be the new majority

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/08/13/census.minorities/>

11/25 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving travel day

11/30 23. Final presentations, I

12/2 24. Final presentations, II

12/7 25. Final presentations, III

12/9 26. Final presentations, IV

Useful Websites:

Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count – <http://www.kidscount.org/>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities – www.cbpp.org

Center for Law and Social Policy – www.clasp.org

Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (Princeton University) – <http://crcw.princeton.edu/>

Child Trends – www.childtrends.org

Foundation for Child Development – <http://fcd-us.org/our-work>

Future of Children – www.futureofchildren.org

And its blog – <http://blogs.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/>

House Ways & Means Committee, *The Green Book* –

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/Documents.asp?section=2168>

Institute for Research on Poverty – www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp

MDRC (welfare experiments) – www.mdrc.org

National Center for Children in Poverty – www.nccp.org

National Poverty Center (University of Michigan) – www.npc.umich.edu

New York Times *Economix* blog – <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com> (search “children” and/or “poverty”; entries by Jason DeParle and Nancy Folbre may be particularly relevant)

Urban Institute – www.urban.org

U.S. Census Bureau (population info and poverty statistics) – www.census.gov