

Professor Theda Skocpol
skocpol@fas.harvard.edu
CGIS Knafel K416: 617-496-0966
Office Hours: By appointment -
contact Abby Peck at
peck@wjh.harvard.edu or 384-9810

Professor Mary Waters
mcw@wjh.harvard.edu
William James Hall 540:
617-495-3947
Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Fellows:
- Porsha Cropper
pcropper@fas.harvard.edu
- Abigail Williamson
abby.williamson@gmail.com

AMERICAN SOCIETY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Core Course: Social Analysis 54, Spring 2009

Website: <http://my.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k51645>

Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am-12pm, with a weekly section to be arranged

Belfer Case Study Room (S-020), CGIS South, 1730 Cambridge Street

At this critical political juncture, Americans are debating fundamental issues about economic wellbeing and social justice. How can the nation expand opportunity and security for workers and families during an economic downturn following years of rising socioeconomic disparities and shifts in the relationship of family life to work? How might we redefine and regulate access to U.S. citizenship in a period of rising legal and illegal immigration from new parts of the world? Given shrinking access and rising costs in health care, will the United States, after many previous failed reform efforts, finally enact comprehensive changes? Controversies in these areas are not new, even if the issues are posed in new ways in this period.

This course poses key questions about U.S. public policymaking and addresses them with an interdisciplinary combination of demographic, ethnographic, organizational, and historical evidence. How do public issues get defined and redefined over time, and why do they appear differently from the perspectives of variously situated groups? How are public policies about problematic social conditions debated, devised, and changed? Analyzed together, demographic data about economic, social, and political trends, survey and ethnographic data about people's everyday lives and outlooks, and historical evidence about changing institutional structures and policy alternatives can help us understand why outcomes often do not simply reflect majority opinion or "solve" widespread problems. Present choices are shaped by previous accomplishments and shortfalls, and debates are skewed by power differentials in the governing process. Often social scientists look at problems a-historically and through one theoretical and methodological lens at a time; but more can be learned by combining styles of empirical research into a historically grounded analysis.

In three major areas -- U.S. social provision, immigration policies, and health care policy -- we will survey long-term societal trends, probing why certain issues but not others have become politically salient or controversial. How have public policies been devised (or failed to occur) in response to societal trends and socially patterned controversies about public social provision, immigration, and access to health care? In what ways have earlier policies, or their absence, contributed to later developments or controversies -- right down to the present moment? Students can expect to emerge from this course with important substantive knowledge about several realms of U.S. social life, politics, and public policy. At the same time, they will gain a critical appreciation of how a triangulation of social science approaches can help us to think clearly about societal problems and alternative possible responses to them.

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND REQUIREMENTS

COURSE MEETINGS AND GRADING

This course will have two one-hour lectures plus a one-hour discussion section (to be arranged) each week. Lectures and sections will not simply repeat one another, so students must attend and participate in both. Readings must be completed on time throughout the semester, both to prepare for weekly discussion sections and to lay the basis for short writing assignments. Grades for the course will be calculated as follows: 40% for the final exam; 40% for the three papers described below; and 20% for section attendance and participation.

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Three short papers (of about five to seven pages apiece) will be due at intervals through the semester.

1. Due at the start of lecture on Monday, March 9:

This first paper gives you an opportunity to synthesize ideas from part one of the course, and the instructors will give you careful feedback on both substance and presentation. Take a position on the following and argue your case, using ideas and evidence from readings, lectures, and section discussions: *American society and democracy have become more and/or less equal since the 1950s*. Outline the most important societal and political trends as you see them and offer arguments about why these trends have unfolded. Your answer should be no more/less than five to seven, double-spaced pages long.

2. Due at the start of lecture on Wednesday, April 15:

Option 1: Prepare a memo for the Obama administration with your analysis of how American immigration policy can be improved. In addition to discussing how many and what type of immigrants should be admitted, discuss whether the government should take a more active role in facilitating immigrant assimilation. Be sure to use evidence from the readings and lectures in developing your recommendations.

Option 2: Public/Community Service paper. See no. 4 below.

3. Due at the start of lecture on Wednesday, April 29:

Option 1: This paper should take the form of an intelligently documented, factually based analysis-advocacy memo directed to a political party, interest group, or leading public official or politician of your choice. Take off from a reading of a currently debated policy statement, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tom Daschle's *Critical: What We Can Do About the Health-Care Crisis* (Thomas Dunne Books, 2008). You may either agree with and build upon Daschle's analysis, or disagree with it and point in a different direction. What are the key problems with U.S. health care/insurance as it now stands and what are the best *and most politically feasible* policies to address these problems? Be sure to analyze societal problems and also offer policy solutions and a discussion of the politics that could lead to their enactment and effectiveness. Obviously, you will outline these strategic considerations from the perspective of the party or politician or group to which your memo is addressed, but you should also show that you understand the likely orientations of other important groups. (For example, a memo directed to liberal Democrats should take account of the stances and leverage of other actors including other Democrats and conservatives. You are showing your overall grasp of societal problems, policy possibilities, and political actors in health care.)

Option 2: Public/Community Service paper. See no. 4 below.

4. Alternative to paper assignment no. 2 or no. 3, with permission. Paper on public/community service.

One kind of substitution is possible for one of the last two assigned papers. A student involved in public or community service may propose to his or her section leader a paper about ways in which readings in this course have implications for service experiences, or vice versa. Guidelines are posted on the course website under [Alternative Paper Assignment](#).

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND REQUIREMENTS

FINAL EXAM

There will be no mid-term exam in Social Analysis 54 but there will be a three-hour final examination, in which students will be asked to answer short factual questions and several essay questions. The essay questions will be selected from a list of questions handed out at the final lecture on Wednesday, April 29. Students may study together to prepare for all of the possible essay questions, but at the exam each person must write his or her own answers (without the assistance of any notes or outlines, which may not be carried into the exam). The Final Exam is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 16.

COURSE READINGS

Books required for reading assignments are listed below. Except for the Schier, *By Invitation Only* book, all are available for purchase from the Harvard Coop. Early in the course, teaching staff will update students on how to access copies of the Schier book. All books (including Schier) are also on reserve at Lamont Library. Links to the Hollis record, showing checkout status for each book, are in the [Find Readings](#) page of the course website.

- Daschle, Tom. *Critical: What We Can Do About the Health-Care Crisis*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008.
- Freeman, Richard B. *America Works: Critical Thoughts on the Exceptional U.S. Labor Market*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007.
- Gornick, Janet C. and Marcia Meyers. *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003.
- Howard, Christopher. *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002.
- Newman, Katherine S. and Victor Tan Chen. *The Missing Class: Portraits of the Near Poor in America*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2007.
- Schier, Steven E. *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000. THIS BOOK IS OUT OF PRINT. COURSE STAFF WILL ADVISE ON HOW TO OBTAIN.
- Warren, Elizabeth and Amelia Warren Tyagi. *The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Mothers and Fathers are Going Broke*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.
- Waters, Mary C. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999.

Online readings: All other readings for this course are available online and can be accessed from the [Find Readings](#) page of the course website.

Sourcebook: If the publisher grants permission to course staff to post/distribute copies of the Schier book to students as a pdf file, there will be no sourcebook. However, if the publisher only allows course staff to distribute paper copies of the Schier book, a sourcebook will be prepared and will be available for purchase from the Coop. Note that the Schier book is assigned to be read for the first week of March. Course staff expect publisher's decision by early February.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Overview.....	Wed 1/28
Why Combine Approaches to Understand Social Issues?	Mon 2/02
I. THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY	
Social Change and Patterns of Inequality.....	Mon 2/09
Political and Civic Transformations	Mon 2/23
II. U.S. SOCIAL POLICY: OPPORTUNITY, SECURITY, INEQUALITY	
Comparative and Historical Perspectives.....	Mon 3/09
Current Debates	Mon 3/16
III. IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP	
Who Does America Welcome?	Mon 3/30
Long-Term Effects of Immigration	Mon 4/06
IV. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE	
Health Care in Modern American Society and Politics.....	Wed 4/15
Recent and Current Debates.....	Mon 4/20
Wrapping up the Course	Mon 4/27

Overview	Week 1 (Wednesday)
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Lecture 1: Introduction to the Course (Skocpol/Waters) Wed 1/28

Why Combine Approaches to Understand Social Issues?	Week 2
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Reading: Freeman, Richard B. *America Works: Critical Thoughts on the Exceptional U.S. Labor Market*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007, chapters 1-4.

Lecture 2: Public Policy and Social Science (Waters) Mon 2/2

Study Cards are due on Wednesday, February 4.

Lecture 3: What We Learn from Historically-Grounded Institutional and Organizational Analysis (Skocpol) Wed 2/4

Sections begin meeting next week. Sectioning procedure to be announced.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

I. THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

This section of the course provides the background we need to delve more fully into particular sets of societal problems and public issues in the next three sections. We survey transformations in patterns of civic and electoral participation from the late nineteenth century to the present. In addition, we survey recent changes in the occupational, income, and demographic components of the population. Social issues and policies to be examined more closely in the following parts of the course are affected by the large scale and long-term patterns considered here.

Social Change and Patterns of Inequality

Week 3

- Readings:** Smeeding, Timothy M. "Poorer by Comparison." *Pathways: A Magazine on Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy*, Winter 2008: 3-5.
- Saez, Emmanuel. "Striking It Richer." *Pathways: A Magazine on Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy*, Winter 2008: 6-7.
- Freeman, Richard B. *America Works: Critical Thoughts on the Exceptional U.S. Labor Market*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2007, chapters 5-9.
- Warren, Elizabeth and Amelia Warren Tyagi. *The Two-Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Mothers and Fathers are Going Broke*. New York: Basic Books, 2003, chapters 1-3 and 5.

- Lecture 4: Explaining Changes in Social Stratification (Waters)** **Mon 2/9**
- Lecture 5: Explaining Changes in Social Stratification, continued (Waters)** **Wed 2/11**
- Sections: Considering various dimensions, is U.S. society becoming more equal or unequal, and why are changes occurring?** **Wed-Fri**

Social Change and Patterns of Inequality, continued

Week 4

- Readings:** Newman, Katherine S. and Victor Tan Chen. *The Missing Class: Portraits of the Near Poor in America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.
- Feldstein, Martin. "Reducing Poverty, Not Inequality." *The Public Interest*, no. 137 (Fall 1999): 33-41.
- Frank, Robert H. "The Pragmatic Case for Reducing Income Inequality." *Pathways*, Winter 2008: 25-27.

- No Lecture: Holiday - Presidents Day** **Mon 2/16**
- Lecture 6: What Difference Does Growing Income Inequality Make? (Waters)** **Wed 2/18**
- Sections: Does rising inequality matter?** **Wed-Fri**

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

I. THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY, continued

Political and Civic Transformations

Week 5

- Readings:** Putnam, Robert D. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1) (January 1995): 65-78.
- Schudson, Michael. "What If Civic Life Didn't Die?" *The American Prospect* 7(25) (March-April 1996).
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Henry E. Brady, and Sidney Verba. "The Big Tilt: Participatory Inequality in America." *The American Prospect* 8(32) (May-June 1997).
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman. "Did Working Women Kill the PTA?" *The American Prospect* 11(20) (September 11, 2000).

- Lecture 7: How America Became a Nation of Organizers and Joiners (Skocpol) Mon 2/23**
- Lecture 8: From Membership to Management in the Late 20th Century (Skocpol) Wed 2/25**
- Sections: What has happened to voluntary groups and civic participation, and why? Wed-Fri**

Political and Civic Transformations, continued

Week 6

- Readings:** Schier, Steven E. *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000. THIS BOOK IS OUT OF PRINT. COURSE STAFF WILL ADVISE ON HOW TO OBTAIN.
- Teixeira, Ruy. "The Future of Red, Blue and Purple America." *Issues in Governance Studies*, Number 11 (January 2008): 1-15.

- Lecture 9: Political Parties and Voters Across Eras (Skocpol) Mon 3/2**
- Lecture 10: The 2008 Election (Skocpol) Wed 3/4**
- Sections: How has U.S. electoral democracy changed? Wed-Fri**

Paper assignment no. 1 on American Society and Democracy is due at the start of lecture on Monday 3/9.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

II. U.S. SOCIAL POLICY: OPPORTUNITY, SECURITY, INEQUALITY

This section of the course looks at the development and impact of America's version of the modern welfare state -- social programs for the poor, elderly, and working families. We examine U.S. social policies in historical and comparative perspective, and gain further insights from demographic, statistic, and ethnographic analyses of the effects of social programs (or their absence). We consider current debates about the future of U.S. social programs.

Comparative and Historical Perspectives

Week 7

Readings: Howard, Christopher. *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy*. Princeton University Press, 2008. Introduction and chapters 1-6.
Gornick, Janet C. and Marcia Meyers. *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003. Chapters 1-4 and 8.

Lecture 11: The Development of U.S. Social Policies (Skocpol) **Mon 3/9**
Paper assignment no. 1 is due at the start of lecture.

Lecture 12: Inequality and Social Policy in Cross-National Perspective (Waters) **Wed 3/11**

Sections: Do American social policies enhance security and reduce inequality? **Wed-Fri**

Current Debates

Week 8

Readings: Howard, Christopher. *The Welfare State Nobody Knows: Debunking Myths about U.S. Social Policy*. Princeton University Press, 2008, chapters 7-10.
Hacker, Jacob S. "Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State." *American Political Science Review* 98(2) (2006): 243-60.

Read prior to 3/18 lecture to prepare for interactive discussion:

Skocpol, Theda and Suzanne Mettler. "Back to School." *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, Fall 2008: 8-18.

Lecture 13: Changing American Families and the Future of Social Policy (Skocpol) **Mon 3/16**

Lecture 14: Higher Education and Social Opportunity (Skocpol) **Wed 3/18**

Sections: Take a position and marshal evidence: to help families, what should the U.S. federal government do, or un-do? **Wed-Fri**

Spring Break

No Lectures. No Sections.

Sat 3/21 - Sun 3/29

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

III. IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This section of the course surveys controversies about the level of immigration and the types of immigrants coming into the United States. We survey past debates about immigration restriction, and discuss the current policies that govern immigration. Then we examine the current effects of immigration, focusing on the economic and cultural impacts of immigrants on American society. Finally, we assess some of the long-term effects of immigration on citizenship and generational assimilation. How different are current debates from those earlier in U.S. history? What does social science research tell us about the prospects for the newest wave of immigrants and their children?

Who Does America Welcome?

Week 9

Readings: Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002.

Huntington, Samuel. "The Hispanic Challenge." *Foreign Policy* Issue 141 (March-April 2004): 30-45.

Carens, Joseph. "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders." *Review of Politics* 49(2) (Spring 1987): 251-73.

Lecture 15: Regulating Immigration: Development of Policy and Laws (Waters) Mon 3/30

Lecture 16: Demographics of Immigration (Waters) Wed 4/1

Sections: Can laws effectively limit immigration into the United States? Wed-Fri

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

III. IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP, continued

Long-Term Effects of Immigration

Week 10

Readings: Zolberg, Aristide R. and Long Litt Woon. "Why Islam is like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States." *Politics and Society* 27, no. 1 (March 1999): 5-38.

Waters, Mary C. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999.

Smith, James P. "Assimilation across the Latino Generations." *The American Economic Review* 93, no. 2 (May 2003), 315-319.

Lecture 17: Citizenship and Undocumented Immigrants (Waters) Mon 4/6

Lecture 18: Theories of Assimilation and Empirical Evidence (Waters) Wed 4/8

Sections: Can American society continue to absorb new immigrants? Wed-Fri

Long-Term Effects of Immigration, continued

Week 11 (Monday)

Readings: Same as for Week 10.

Lecture 19: Language, Race, and the Future of American Culture (Waters) Mon 4/13

Paper assignment no. 2 on Immigration and Citizenship or alternative paper assignment no. 4 on Public/Community Service is due at the start of lecture on Wednesday 4/15.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

IV. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Over the course of the twentieth century, Americans have defined changing needs for health care, and the institutional arrangements for delivering care and facilitating access to it have changed considerably. We will survey these trends, and probe public policies in relation to them. Despite repeated political movements aiming to achieve extended or universal health insurance coverage, why has the United States never used government to guarantee or provide such coverage, except (from the 1960s onward) for the elderly and the very poor? How are we to understand the turnarounds of the Health Security debate of 1993-94 and recently revived national debate over comprehensive health care reform? Given past trends and episodes, what are alternative possible futures for health care coverage and delivery?

Health Care in Modern American Society and Politics

Week 11 (Wednesday)

Readings: Hacker, Jacob S. "The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy." *Studies in American Political Development* 12 (1) (Spring 1998): 57-130.

Lecture 20: American Medicine and Public Policy (Skocpol) **Wed 4/15**
Paper assignment no. 2(or alternative paper assignment no. 4) is due at the start of lecture.

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Sections: Why has there been no universal health coverage in the United States? **Wed-Fri**

Recent and Current Debates

Week 12

Readings: Skocpol, Theda. "The Rise and Resounding Demise of the Clinton Plan." *Health Affairs* 14(1) (Spring 1995): 66-85.

Daschle, Tom (with Scott Greenberger and Jeanne Lambrew). *Critical: What We Can Do about the Health-Care Crisis*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008.

Pointers to be provided for web search of current debates.

Lecture 21: Trends in Health Insurance and the Social Costs (Guest Lecturer: Katherine Swartz) **Mon 4/20**

Lecture 22: From the 1993-94 Clinton Health Reform Debacle to Current Health Reform Debates (Skocpol) **Wed 4/22**

Sections: Where should U.S. health policy go -- and why? **Wed-Fri**

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Wrapping up the Course

Week 13

Readings: No readings assigned

Lecture 23: What We Have Learned about American Society and Public Policy
(Skocpol/Waters)

Mon 4/27

Paper assignment no. 3, Memo on Health Care Reform, or alternative paper assignment no. 4 on Public/Community Service is due at the start of lecture on Wednesday 4/29.

Lecture 24: Summation and Evaluation of the Course (Skocpol/Waters)

Wed 4/29

Paper assignment no. 3 (or alternative paper assignment no. 4) is due at the start of lecture.

Essay questions for the Final Exam will be distributed at the lecture on Wednesday, April 29.

Sections: Review and Looking Ahead to the Final Exam

Wed-Fri

The Final Examination for this course is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 16.