The George Washington University

Political Science 3192WID Section 13:
Intergenerational Policy

Spring 2018

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Course Number and Section
PSC 3192W Section 13

Course CRN
31723

Course Location
Media and Public Affairs
Room 302

Course Time
11:10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Course Description

Robert Samuelson wrote in the Washington Post of December 9, 2013 “We are locked in a generational war, which will only get worse before it gets better. Indeed, it may not get better for a long time. No one wants to admit this, because it’s ugly and unwelcome. Parents are supposed to care for their children, and children are supposed to care for their aging parents. For families, these collective obligations may work. But what makes sense for families doesn’t always succeed for society as a whole. The clash of generations is intensifying.”

Federal programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, programs that overwhelmingly favor the elderly, are running roughshod over other national concerns i.e. defense, courts, research, environment, roads, education, etc. Samuelson states explicitly “The federal government is increasingly a transfer agency; taxes from the young and middle-aged are spent on the elderly.” Yet, the general well-being of the elderly in the U.S. partly reflects the success of Medicare and Social Security.

This course will examine some of the complex demographic, political, economic, changing concepts of old age, and other social forces that are shaping intergenerational policy in this country today. It will provide an introduction to some of the issues at stake as the younger and
middle-aged generation in the U.S. engage in political skirmishes, leading to what very well may be a reorganization of taxing and spending priorities of the federal government.

**Course Goal**

My primary goal is to engage the student in weighing both policy and political tradeoffs raised by various issues and proposals. We will strive to achieve an overview of how these issues might affect one another. Different points of view will be examined. The question of what will and what can be the future of generational policy in America is at the heart of the course experience.

The course will include selected readings, extensive in-class discussion and participation, several writing exercises, and a final exam.

**Student Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, the student should know or be able to do the following:

1. To conduct themselves under a strictly enforced honor code.
2. To be able to identify the participants in the intergenerational debate.
3. To compare and contrast the recognized values for the evaluation and development of policy.
4. To identify the policymakers and institutions in the intergenerational policy debate.
5. To contrast the motivations of the interest groups, policymakers, and how they pursue their aims.
6. To be able to identify the U.S. constitutional issues raised.
7. To examine the history of how intergenerational transfers are organized, paid for, and delivered.
8. To examine how programs became “entitlements”.
9. To be able to articulate a proposition for societal “responsibility” to the pre and post generation.
10. To examine the Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and environmental policies and programs enabling the student to list their important attributes and challenges for the future.
11. To analyze the issues related changing demographics affecting generational policy.
12. To be able to construct a quality article review of a policy paper.
13. To be able to create a topical research paper demonstrating a breadth and depth of quality, footnoted, and sourced material.
14. To design a policy briefing paper which analyzes an issue and presents alternatives for a policymaker.
15. To actively participate in peer review of other students writings and to effectively summarize observations and criticism.

**Course Writing Requirements**

The GWU Writing Program is designed to assist students with writing throughout their academic career. During the sophomore and junior year, students take two Writing in the Discipline (WID) courses. WID courses, intended as follow-up courses to UW20, are designed to facilitate student involvement with particular bodies of knowledge, their methods of scholarship, and modes of communication. These discipline-based courses are designed to have a significant writing component, but are not designed to teach students basic writing skills. Rather, the function of
WID courses is to engage students in writing frequently and intensively with editing and rewriting to improve both learning and communication.

PSC 3192 W Section 13 is a Writing in the Discipline (WID) course and provides the appropriate WID credit to qualified students. There will be three writing assignments (please see PSC 3192W Syllabus Section titled “Required Papers”) for each student to complete. Students are required to submit substantial drafts for each assignment for comment (by the professor and/or peer-review) and undertake subsequent revision based on comments received.

**Required Class Material**

One standard letter size (8.5 x 11 in.) legal pad with white or yellow paper for pop quizzes, communications, etc. Bring to each class.

**Required Texts**

None.

**Suggested Daily/Weekly Scanning**

1. *Washington Post*
2. *Wall Street Journal*
3. *New York Times*
4. *Time Magazine*
5. *Newsweek*
6. *U.S. News and World Report*

**Additional Readings**


**Library Reserve Material**

As announced in class.

**Resources and Homepages for Institutes and Organizations:**

AARP: [http://www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)  
Shakings and Happenings

The New York Times has dubbed the George Washington University (GW) as the "...the West Point of the political wars." One of the most commonly cited reasons why students choose to attend GWU is a keen interest in government, politics, policy, media, and the interaction of interest groups on the national scene. Often, many academic courses do not provide the student with an adequate opportunity to engage with other students in examination and debate about contemporary issues and developments. This course will provide such an opportunity at the beginning of each class. These approximately 15 minute exercises are referred to as “Shakings and Happenings.” Students are strongly encouraged to scan the national media between each class and come prepared to present the elements of an issue and to engage in a pro and con examination with other classmates. Thoughtful class participation in this part of the class will be considered in calculating the student’s final grade.

Reading Assignments

Students will be assigned individual readings from links to articles, essays, texts and potentially from handouts. Students should be prepared to discuss the reading assignment for that day, including those classes that may have a guest lecturer. Students will be responsible for all the material covered. If possible, students are encouraged to try to stay ahead of the reading assignment by at least one class. Again, thoughtful class participation will be considered in calculating the student’s final grade.

Final Exam

There will be one final written examination covering the material from the entire course. This examination may be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Multiple-choice questions for the final examination will be primarily drawn from the assigned readings and lecture material. Essay questions will be primarily drawn from topical class discussions. Again,
students will be responsible for all the material covered in class. The final examination will account for 40% each of the student’s final class grade.

Note: It is essential to include the full honor code pledge at the end of each exam with the student’s individual signature.

Required Writing Assignments

Students will be required to submit three papers during the semester. These papers will be initially submitted as drafts for comments by the professor and by one’s fellow students.

The writing assignments for this course are designed to show what you think and how you organize your thoughts in a written presentation. Each paper will vary in a specified length but must be in 12 pts font size, one sided printing. Papers must be submitted hard copy on the specified dates (5 points will be subtracted from the paper for each day or portion of a day the paper is late.) Communicating extreme extenuating circumstances, students may submit papers as an attachment to an email.

The three papers are:

1. First Writing Assignment – An Article Review
2. Second Writing Assignment – A Research Paper with Interview Material
3. Third Writing Assignment – A Policy Issue Briefing Paper

Each final paper will be graded according to the following:

- Name typed in the top right hand corner of each page.
- Proper format.
- Content (i.e. how well the paper fulfills the assignment and the overall quality of ideas and analysis presented).
- Proper citation of sources including footnotes at the bottom of each page, grammar, spelling, typographical errors, etc.
- Quality and exactness of written descriptions.
- Quality of evaluation.
- Quality of written support.
- Quality of sources used.

The research paper and the policy briefing paper will examine an issue identified in class. The Professor must approve topics in advance. Topics may be assigned for the research paper and must be submitted as specified. In the papers, particular attention must be given to description and evaluation. Aggressive and complete footnoting are required. Individual grades for each written assignment are determined based on (1) the professor’s evaluation of your participation in the peer review process (written and oral evaluation of another student’s work, and, (2) the quality of submitted drafts and the reflection that comments by the professor and your fellow students are reflected in the final submission. The cumulative grades for the three writing assignments will be averaged and will account for 50% of the student’s total final class grade.

Please make note of the due dates for drafts and final writing products for each of the three assignments.
Note: It is essential to include fully typed honor code pledge at the end of the paper with the student’s individual signature.

Study Group

One of the strongest recommendations for this course is for students to form an outside study group to routinely meet to review class materials, compare class notes, and to go-over classroom discussions. Organization and initiation of this study group early in the semester is crucial to its success. If, at any time, some members of the study group are free-riding on the work of others and not making serious/routine contributions to the success of the study sessions, drop these individuals and move on with a highly motivated core group. Like peer review, study groups are a part of serious academic work. Also, experience in this class has shown that active and routine participation in a study group can increase the likelihood of enhanced performance on quizzes, examinations, and written assignments.

Instructor’s Philosophy and Course Policies

The following represents the philosophy of the Professor and the course policies. They are all important to understand.

- Each student is expected to be familiar with the university’s academic integrity code. It is of critical importance for the student to know that the Professor has established an individual honor code for this class. For this course, each quiz, exam, and paper handed in as part of this class will contain the following written statement by the individual student on the outside of the submitted material “I have neither given nor received aid on this work. All material is mine or otherwise footnoted accordingly.” Each student is expected to sign this statement with his or her full name each and every time it is used. This is an aspect of the course that must be taken extremely seriously by each student. The Professor will not tolerate academic cheating, dishonesty, and/or plagiarism and will immediately fail the student/s that participates in such activities. All violations will be reported to the appropriate academic authorities.
- If the student is here to learn, the Professor is here to teach. If the student has any other possible agenda, they should seriously consider taking some other course.
- You must do the work. This course cannot be audited.
- Email communications with the Professor are acceptable. I will respond to emails routinely, but it could take up to 48 hours for a response. Each email to the Professor from a student must include “PSC 3192 Section 13” in the subject line.
- Due to my active travel schedule (domestic and international) it is best for students to consider calling my office at (202) 271-2231 to leave a message.
- The Professor is available for scheduled meetings with students on campus. Please email a meeting request. Depending on availability, the Professor will schedule in advance a meeting with a student immediately prior to or after a regular class.
- Class attendance is mandatory and recorded through participation in daily pop quizzes.
- Reading assignments and class discussion will take place on all class days, except examination days, unless otherwise advised.
- For purposes of review, it is recommended that students consider individually noting their daily quiz grades as well as the questions utilized in the quizzes.
- There is absolutely no circumstance in which a pop quiz can be made up.
- Make up final exams will be given only in the event of extreme extenuating circumstances judged solely by the Professor.
All quizzes, exams, and papers handed in as part of this class are available to the individual student for examination. However, all such materials will remain in the ultimate possession of the Professor.

All class announcements will be assumed to have been heard once they are made - especially regarding assignments or change of schedule.

The Professor will not accept for credit any assignment submitted more than one class period after the specified due date.

It is not acceptable to send email attachments of written assignments in lieu of producing them in class as specified. Explicit and special permission from the Professor must be obtained in advance for a variance of this policy. Penalty points may be assessed.

The student will not submit for credit in PSC 3192 any work submitted for credit in another class.

There is absolutely no opportunity for extra credit assignments.

“Grade grubbing” should not even be contemplated.

Cell phones and other electronic communication devices must be turned off during all class sessions.

Laptop computers cannot be used in this class except in circumstances due to disability and then only with prior permission of the professor.

Do not bring to class newspapers, magazines, crossword puzzles, etc.

Students cannot change their class status (i.e. grade versus pass/fail) after final grades are submitted.

This course does not utilize Blackboard.

Students often ask what recognized writing style is preferred. For questions on research, formatting, documentation style, etc. go to Diana Hacker's (Bedford/St. Martin's) website. If you would like to look at writing tips, exercises, model papers, etc. I suggest Rules for Writers, Fifth Edition, Diana Hacker, Prince George's Community College. Her basic website http://content.bfwpub.com/webroot_pubcontent/Content/BCS_2/ReWriting_basics%202e/rewritingbasics2e/resdoc5e/ is available for other resource assistance. It is important to note that the Professor for PSC 3192 differs with Ms. Hacker regarding the topic of footnoting material. All footnotes are to be complete and thorough and must appear on the bottom of each page of the written assignment. In terms of preference I prefer the Chicago method of footnoting. A source for this method is https://politics.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/chicago%20style%20guide.pdf.

Disability Accommodation Self-disclosure

Any student who feels she/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services office at (202) 994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/.

Grades

The total possible grade points for this class are 100. It is of paramount importance that the student understands that there are no plus or minus grades for this course – trust me, don’t ask.
Also, absolutely no chance exists for grades to be curved. Final grades will break down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation – Quiz Grades</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Average of Course Writings</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final class grades are: 100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70 = C, 69-60 = D, 59-0 = F

**Class Schedule**

*It is vital for students to know that the class schedule is subject to change. Due to previously committed lectures, business travel, and scheduled legislative/regulatory engagements, some routine class days on the calendar will/may be missed. An effort will be made to reschedule some of these classes. Students are strongly encouraged to be alert for class announcements and email alerts in this regard.*

Tuesday, January 16

**Administrative, Introductions, Syllabus, Identification of Issues, Article Assignment - “Generational Theft Needs to Be Arrested” Electronic Handout**

Tuesday, January 23

**Generational Responsibility and the Equity Debate**


Tuesday, January 30 (First Draft of Article Review Due [not more than 5 pages in length])

**Promises Made - How did we get where we are?**

Tuesday, February 6 (Class Discussion of Peer Reviewed Article Drafts)

**Role of Entitlements and Fiscal Realities - Social Security**
- “The Can Kicks Back”, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVAQowN0Nu4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVAQowN0Nu4)

Tuesday, February 13 (Final Article Review Due [not more than 10 pages in length])

**Role of Entitlements and Fiscal Realities - Medicare, and Medicaid**

Tuesday, February 20 (Research Question, Outline, and List of Sources for Research Paper Due)

**Population – Old, Young, and In-Between**

Tuesday, February 27 (First Draft of Research Paper Due [not more than 5-7 pages in length])

**Defining Demography – How do we look at and think about generations and Disparity?**
• “Building Stronger Communities for Better Health: The Geography of Health Equity”, Brian D. Smedley, Ph.D., Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, (Presentation Slides to be emailed from Professor.)

Tuesday, March 6 (Class Discussion of Peer Reviewed First Draft of Research Paper)

Looking at Data – What counts and what can be counted?

Tuesday, March 13 (No Class - Spring Break)

Tuesday, March 20 (Final Research Paper Due [not more than 15 pages in length])

How Does a Population Change?

Mortality Transitions – What are the drivers?

Fertility - Where are all the babies?

Tuesday, April 3

Policy Communications that Matter – Writing Issue Briefing Papers
Electronic Handout

Tuesday, April 10

Life Expectancy & Longevity (Readings must be obtained from the WRLC Library Services Login using your GWid account number)
• James Oeppen, and Vaupel JW., Broken Limits to Life Expectancy, Science, vol.
Tuesday, April 17 (First Draft of Policy Brief Due [not more than 5-7 pages in length])

**Isn’t it just about the money! Taxes and Reform of Income and/or Wealth Disparity.**
- “The Unequal State of America: A Reuters Series”.
- *Distribution of Wealth in America* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnjnsM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnjnsM)
- *Debunking that Stupid Wealth Disparity* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6vF8_ZeqMk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6vF8_ZeqMk)
- “This viral video is right: We need to worry about wealth inequality.”, Ezra Klein, March 6, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/03/06/this-viral-video-is-right-we-need-to-worry-about-wealth-inequality/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/03/06/this-viral-video-is-right-we-need-to-worry-about-wealth-inequality/)

Tuesday, April 24 (Class Discussion of Peer Reviewed First Draft of Policy Brief)

**The Politics of Aging and Generational Conflict**
- "Politics of Aging Fact Sheet" with graphs and international comparisons, see: [http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org_/articles/international/AARP_graphs_1.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org_/articles/international/AARP_graphs_1.pdf)
- **Concord Coalition.** The Concord Coalition advocates against budget deficits that imperil future generations: [http://www.concordcoalition.org/](http://www.concordcoalition.org/)
- **Generations United.** Generations United focuses on intergenerational strategies, programs, and policies. This is the only organization advocating for children, youth, and older adults. [http://www.gu.org/](http://www.gu.org/)
Tuesday, May 1 (Final Policy Brief Due [not more than 15-20 pages in length])

**Asking Better Questions, Potential Policy Alternatives, and Observations of a Geezer**


(What Comes Next!)

Tuesday, May 8 (Pending Final Exam – Subject to Change)