

	Department of History and Political Science POL 4045: Inequality & Social Policy 4 units
Fall 2025	

Meeting Days/Times Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-2:15pm	Instructor Title and Name: Dr. Amy Nantkes
Meeting Location: Evans 113	Phone: 949.266.4822
Final Exam: Thursday 12/18 1:30-4:00 pm	Email: anantkes@pointloma.edu
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PLNU MISSION: To Teach – To Shape – To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE MISSION:

As followers of Christ, the Department of History and Political Science promotes wisdom and scholarship about historical contexts and political systems, so that graduates can become local and global leaders in the service of Christ and humanity.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar-style course focuses on inequality and the social welfare system in the United States. Throughout the course, we will examine various measures of poverty and wealth, with an emphasis on wage, wealth, and income inequality. We will trace the history of policies and programs within this domain, paying particular attention to how issues of race and gender intersect with social welfare policy. Additionally, we will analyze past solutions to poverty and evaluate their effectiveness while considering innovative new approaches that are currently being piloted around the world. By the end of the course, students will select a specific dimension of poverty and propose policy methods to address that issue through partnerships among public, private, and social sectors.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Articulate the history and ideology of the eras of social welfare policy and inequality in the United States
- Analyze the relationships between politics, economics, social structure, public policy, and inequality
- Differentiate the multidimensional indicators of poverty in various locales in the United States

- Utilize research and data to inform evidence-based policymaking activity in this domain, with a focus on the potential for public-private partnerships.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Understand and critically assess the processes, theories, and outcomes of political Institutions and political behavior.
- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner.
- Demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument.
- Construct and evaluate analytical, comprehensive arguments.

COURSE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will meet twice per week, and to maximize your learning process, it is in your best interest that you attend each of these sessions. It is also **essential** that the readings be completed before coming to class, as the lecture and discussion will usually expand on and draw from the readings. Class time activities will vary but often include a combination of lectures, discussion, group activities, writing, and videos.

COURSE REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required Resources:

- *Regulating the Poor* (Updated Edition) by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (ISBN 978-0679745167)
- *Who Owns Poverty?* by Martín Burt (ISBN 978-1912157129)
- Articles, Podcasts, and Videos as listed in the syllabus and available under the weekly overview in modules on Canvas

Recommended Resources for Additional Exploration:

- See Canvas for the complete list

COURSE CREDIT HOUR INFORMATION

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 4-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 150 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

STATE AUTHORIZATION

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

COURSE POLICIES

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All assignments are to be submitted by the due dates posted and will be considered late if submitted after midnight Pacific Standard Time on the day they are due. If an assignment is submitted late, the points possible for the assignment decrease by 10% each day for four days after the due date. **Any assignment or deliverable submitted more than four days late will not be accepted. Presentations, Exams, and Reading Responses cannot be “made up” and must be completed on the due date.**

All deliverables for the course, including assignments, projects, presentations, papers, etc., must be turned in by 11:59 pm on the last day of the course. No extensions or incompletes will be given to students to complete course requirements.

If you believe you have an extenuating circumstance, such as illness or family emergency, please send Dr. Nantkes an email or come talk to me as soon as possible so that we may speak about your options. With abundant notice, I'll be as accommodating as possible, as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires giving your final presentation **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

CLASS ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Your active and thoughtful presence is essential for the success of this course. Our class will focus on discussion, collaboration, and critical engagement with complex materials. Your final grade will reflect both attendance and preparation. Participation is about engaging with the material and each other, not just speaking the most. Repeated absences or lack of preparation may lower your grade.

If you face challenges affecting your participation, please reach out to me early so we can find a solution together.

CLASS CONDUCT POLICY

Respect for the views and values of others is an essential characteristic of a thriving learning community. Although it is likely that we may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in our course, we will behave and express our viewpoints in a manner that is courteous and professional. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a respectful and profound manner are encouraged. Our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of topics as presented in the course as scholars, using research and data to defend our assertions. We will develop Class Norms in Week 1 of the course and will keep each other mutually accountable to our commitment to productive and respectful discourse.

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be

equitable, inclusive, and prejudice-free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups on any of the above. You may report an incident(s) using the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND DISCRIMINATION

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

CONTENT WARNING

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. Our course content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics may include war, poverty, assault, and domestic violence. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center.

Should you choose to sit out on a discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material, but we can discuss other methods for accessing that material and assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in Political Science, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

PLNU POLICIES

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the

seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. In some courses, a portion of the credit hour content will be delivered asynchronously, and attendance will be determined by submitting the assignments by the posted due dates. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog. If absences exceed these limits but are due to university excused health issues, an exception will be granted.

SPIRITUAL CARE

Please be aware that PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain, or have prayer requests, you can contact the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In order to be successful in the online environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [Technology and System Requirements](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers compatible with their computer available to use. If a student needs technological resources, please contact [student-tech-](#)

request@pointloma.edu. Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assignment Distribution by Percentage

Participation & Attendance	10%
Weekly Reading Reflections	20%
Policies & Programs Presentation	15%
Personal Viewpoint on Social Welfare Policy Paper	15%
SD County Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Reflection	15%
Final Project	30%
Surveys & Course Reflection	5%

Grade Scale

Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentage of Points Earned

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-88	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F < than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

ASSIGNMENTS (See Canvas for templates and detailed instructions)

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance and engagement with our course material are critical to your success in this class and make our classroom a better experience for all!

To earn full credit:

- Attend all classes consistently and arrive on time.
- Communicate in a timely manner if you must miss a class due to illness or emergencies.
- Complete all assigned readings and media before class.
- Contribute meaningfully to discussions and group work.
- Engage by asking questions and responding thoughtfully to peers.
- Show that you can use technology responsibly by staying on task when we are working on our laptops. No phones out or scrolling during class.

Please see Canvas for more details.

WEEKLY READING REFLECTIONS (TUESDAYS)

As a student of policy, it is vital that you comprehend our readings and bring your critical thinking and discussion skills to our course throughout the semester. Therefore, you will write Reading Reflections to support you in comprehension, critical thinking, and to bolster class discussion.

These responses must be submitted on Canvas before class begins on Tuesday and cannot be made up.

POLICIES & PROGRAMS PRESENTATION

For this assignment, you will research one assigned policy/program area and present to the class. Your deliverables will be 3 items:

- 1-page handout (in a PDF format) to share with your classmates
- 10-minute in-class presentation
- 5-minute in-class discussion/activity

PERSONAL VIEWPOINT ON SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

In this 3–4-page paper, you will reflect on your own experiences and philosophy on social welfare in the United States. You will use course content from Part I of the course and any other resources you determine to be applicable to frame your explanation of your point of view. See Canvas for more details on this assignment.

SD COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING REFLECTION

During the semester, you will (virtually) attend one SD County Social Services Advisory Board Meeting and reflect on what you learned about the role of public-private partnerships on this board. More information and the link to the meeting can be found on Canvas.

FINAL PROJECT

For your final project, you will conduct research throughout the semester with teammates to identify one type of multi-dimensional poverty that is causing particular concern in the community and determine an innovative way to support people in the community to address their relationship to poverty in this indicator.

A list of potential issues is available on Canvas for your consideration, but you may also choose another topic with the professor's approval.

Further details about this assignment will be given in class and are available on Canvas.

Several deliverables will be assigned for this project, as outlined below. Please check the course calendar for due dates.

- **Step 1 Topic Selection**
- **Step 2 Gather Information (Interviews & Research)**
- **Step 3 Develop Indicator**
- **Step 4 Locate Solutions**
- **Step 5 Proposal Rough Draft**
- **Step 6 Proposal Final Draft and Presentation**

COURSE SCHEDULE			
WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Part I: How do we view poverty in America? Ideology, Poverty Measurement, and Major Programs			
WEEK 1 Course Introduction	TUESDAY 9/2	Read Syllabus	
	THURSDAY 9/4	Read 1. Talking About Poverty Report (p. 3-6 and team's assigned section)	Introduction Survey (due Thursday before class)

WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 2 What do we believe about government involvement and people experiencing poverty?	TUESDAY 9/9	Read 1. Piven & Cloward Chapter 1 2. Michener, SoRelle, & Thurston Article	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 9/11	Read 1. Blau & Abramovitz Ch 5 (team's assigned sections only)	
WEEK 3 Why does inequality matter?	TUESDAY 9/16	Read 1. Stiglitz Article 2. Farrigan Article on Rural Poverty	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 9/18	Read 1. Hanks, Solomon, Weller Article on Racial Inequality & Poverty Listen 1. Freakonomics Podcast: Is the American Dream Really Dead? (42 minutes)	
WEEK 4 How does the U.S. measure poverty and what are we doing to address it?	TUESDAY 9/23	Read 1. Poverty: The History of a Measure Infographic 2. How the U.S. Census Bureau Measures Poverty 3. Wolff Chapter: Beyond Poverty (pg. 24-37 only) Watch 1. Not Just a Number: Understanding Poverty Using the Capabilities Approach and the SPM (2 minutes)	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 9/25	Read 1. Amadeo Article : An overview of major programs in the U.S. 2. New York Times Article : Pandemic Aid Programs Spur a Record Drop in Poverty	Personal Viewpoint on Social Welfare Paper (due Sunday)
PART II: How did we get here? The history of social welfare policy in the U.S.			
WEEK 5	TUESDAY 9/30	Read 1. Piven and Cloward Ch 2	Reading Reflection (due

WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Wartime (1930s-1940s)			before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 10/2	Read 1. Piven and Cloward Ch 3 Listen 2. NPR: A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America (35 minutes)	Policies & Programs Presentation: Income Support (due in class Thursday)
WEEK 6 The Welfare Rights Movement and War on Poverty (1960s-1970s)	TUESDAY 10/7	Read 1. Piven and Cloward Ch 6 2. Freeman and Kolozi Article on Dr. King and America's Fourth Revolution	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 10/9	Read 1. Piven and Cloward Ch 9 and 10	Policies & Programs Presentation: Jobs and Training (due in class Thursday) Final Project Topic Idea (due Sunday)
WEEK 7 Deindustrialization and the War Against Labor (1970s-1990s)	TUESDAY 10/14	Read 1. Piven and Cloward Ch 11	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 10/16	Read 1. Stoesz and Karger Article on the Reagan Era Watch 1. How Radical Gardeners Took Back New York City (13 minutes)	Policies & Programs Presentation: Housing (due in class Thursday) SD County Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Reflection (due Sunday)

WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 8 Ending “Welfare as We Know It” (1990s-2000)	TUESDAY 10/21	Read 1. Carcasson Article on Rhetoric of 1990s Reforms p. 654-679 2. Gustafson Article on the Criminalization of Poverty p. 658-694 (do not need to read footnotes) 3. Grabowski Article on Reform and Self-Efficacy Watch 1. 187: The Rise of the Latino Vote (90 minutes)	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday) Policies & Programs Presentation: Healthcare (due in class Tuesday) Midcourse Survey (due Sunday)
Fall Break: NO CLASS 10/23-10/24			
WEEK 9 Welfare in the New Millennium (2000-Today)	TUESDAY 10/28	NONE (Work ahead for Thursday!)	NONE (Work ahead for Thursday!)
	THURSDAY 10/30	Read/Skim for Understanding 1. Marx Article on Current Issues and Programs in Social Welfare (2001-2017) 2. Daguerre Article on Obama’s Welfare and Antipoverty Policies 3. Brookings Article on Trump Administration I 3. CBPP Report on the American Rescue Plan (2023) 4. Trump Administration II article (TBD)	Policies & Programs Presentation: Food and Hunger (due in class Thursday) Final Project Gather Information (Interviews & Research) (due Sunday)
PART III: What does inequality cost society? Understanding the multidimensionality of poverty			
WEEK 10	TUESDAY 11/4	Read 1. Burt Ch 1-4	Reading Reflection (due

WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Income and Employment			before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 11/6 Guest Speaker Larry Reed of Thrive Lights	Read 1. Chetty article on Economic Impacts of COVID-19 2. SEED Stockton (UBI Experiment) White Paper (Read Executive Summary on Page 1 & Read Implications/Policy Page 21-22; Skim the rest of paper) 3. Romich and Hill Article on Federal Minimum Wage	
WEEK 11 Health and Environment	TUESDAY 11/11 (Team meetings)	Read 1. Burt Ch 5-8	Meet with your team to develop your indicator
	THURSDAY 11/13	Read 1. IRPC Report on Health Inequity 2. Enterprise Community Partners Food at Home Report (Pages 13-26) 3. United States of Care Article on Solutions to the Mental Health Crisis	Final Project: Develop Indicator (Due Sunday)
WEEK 12 Housing and Infrastructure	TUESDAY 11/18	Read 1. Burt Ch 9-11	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 11/20 Guest Speaker: Rachel Lozano Castro, MPA PANA Refugee & Immigrant Hub & Campus	Read 1. KPBS Article on City Heights Opportunity Zone 2. Levin Article on Remote Work and the CA Housing Crisis 3. SSIR Article on Innovative Solutions for the Housing Crisis	

WEEK & TOPIC	CLASS MEETING	READING/MEDIA DUE	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
WEEK 13 Organization and Participation	TUESDAY 11/25	Read 1. Burt Ch 12-14 & Reflections Watch 1. Ecosystem of Opportunity: A Short Thunder Valley CDC Documentary (12 minutes)	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday) Final Project: Locate Solutions Handout (due Tuesday midnight)
Thanksgiving Recess: NO CLASS 11/26-11/28			
WEEK 14 Education and Culture	TUESDAY 12/2	Read 1. Watch Video: Geoffrey Canada's Interview on 60 Minutes (14 min) 2. Harlem Children's Zone Report 2022-2024 (skim!) Watch 1. 11th Street Bridge Park Equitable Development Plan (4 min)	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 12/4	Meet in teams to complete rough draft	Final Project Rough Draft of Proposal (due Sunday)
WEEK 15 Interiority and Motivation	TUESDAY 12/9	Listen 1. IRP Podcast on Social Poverty (32 minutes) 2. Poverty Unpacked Podcast on Aspirations (30 minutes)	Reading Reflection (due before class Tuesday)
	THURSDAY 12/11	NO READING	Final Thoughts Class Reflection (due before class Thursday)
FINAL EXAM Final Project Proposal & Presentations	THURSDAY 12/18 1:30-4:00 pm	Final Project due In-class Presentations	