

### **Course Description**

This course explores the intersection of families and public policy, examining how policies are developed, implemented, and evaluated in relation to family well-being. Students will analyze policy related to key family issues while considering the broader social, economic, and historical contexts that shape family policy.

### **Course Objectives**

On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain why families are relevant to the creation of public policy
2. Articulate how to determine when a policy can be defined as “family policy”
3. Describe how the definition of “family” impacts family policy creation
4. Explain the processes by which family policy is developed
5. Discuss policy related to family issues such as marriage, birth, adoption, caregiving, employment, divorce, and healthcare
6. Explain the importance of identifying and minimizing negative unintended consequences of family policy
7. Analyze the impact of the larger society on family policy including historical period, civil rights, and economic health
8. Explain how people with different perspectives can work together to create effective policy
9. Describe how family and child professionals can influence family policy

This course has been designated a **High Impact Practice (HIP)** course regarding **Diverse Perspectives**. As such, additional course objectives include the following:

- Students will explain (a) new or different perspective(s) as a result of learning from or with diverse communities or cultures.
- Students will create conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.

**Here is the tentative schedule:**

**My Philosophy of Learning**

I assume that students are serious about learning and motivated to be successful. I believe in using teaching techniques that have been scientifically shown to increase the changes of an effective learning environment. I will work to **facilitate** student learning (**students** are ultimately responsible for their own education) by encouraging that students do the following with course content:

- **acquire** (students need to read and study),
- **process** (students should think, ponder, critique, and, when applicable, discuss),
- **apply** (students should apply knowledge to own professional/personal circumstances), and
- **act** (when applicable, students should practice and use skills-based content)

Class time will be weighted toward processing information and beginning to apply course information (most application and acting should happen outside of class).

Every student interested in learning is welcome in my courses. Regardless of your identity, family background, personal challenges, and beliefs, **you belong**. Thus, we must all work to establish a welcoming and respectful atmosphere. At the same time, I believe that at a university we should consider and analyze a **variety of perspectives, even if they challenge popular and comfortable ideas and trends**. I do not believe that all possible perspectives are equally right or of equal value, but I try to leave those judgments to students. While it is important to be civil and sensitive when exploring controversial issues, learning is hampered when we feel overly inhibited to express an unpopular opinion or ask a question that appears to challenge a popular idea. Exploring or questioning ideas is not in itself an attack on anyone who endorses and lives accordingly; demeaning the choices of individuals or groups of people, however, is unwelcome.

I also believe that exposure to content that might provoke anxiety in some students can be a valuable part of learning. While content can sometimes **trigger feelings associated with trauma**, experiencing and processing those feelings appear to be an important part of healing. However, students should monitor themselves and take steps to seek out additional resources to help with the processing when needed.

I encourage students to share responsibility for creating a stimulating learning environment by participating fully in discussions, activities, and assignments. I invite students to **ask questions** in class and share their personal concerns about the class with me so that I can respond to students' efforts to make learning effective. Please join me in these efforts.

### **Course Requirements**

**Required Readings:** To support Textbook Affordability at Ball State (TABS), course readings consist of open educational resources (OER). These readings are free of charge to access and download and are linked to modules in Canvas.

**Attendance (135 points):** This course will adhere to the policy published in the BSU Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities. You are expected to attend class on-time and stay for the duration of the class. Not attending class may affect financial aid. Furthermore, learning activities rely on and are enriched by high attendance rates. Students learn valuable lessons from hearing and processing each other's experiences and insights.

**Absences can be made up** through taking a test on an assigned reading (for a typical day--contact me for more information if you wish to do a makeup) or creating a policy presentation (for days we do a Policy Investigation Workshop--[see instructions](#)). Turn in makeup assignments via email within one week of the absence. Each student will begin the class **one free absence** to use at any time. Do not come to class if you are sick--illness should be documented to qualify for making up missed attendance points (try to use your extra points for minor illnesses if needed). Overall, I am willing to work with you, and I understand that situations can be complicated, so just do your best to alert me before extended absences.

Various other assignments designed to help students reach the objective of the course are described on Canvas.

**Honors Students:** I am willing to explore possibilities to work with you on an honors project for this class; just let me know.

**Research Opportunities:** If you are interested in volunteering to be involved in conducting research (not as a participant but as an assistant researcher), contact me to discuss your interests. If you are considering graduate school, it is highly recommended that you get some research experience. I cannot guarantee I have a role for you, but I might.

**Graduate School:** If you are considering graduate school (especially in a program related to Family Studies), it is a good idea that I get to know you personally (your name, interests, abilities) so that I am able to write a helpful letter of recommendation should you end up requesting one.

## **Policies**

**Face Mask Policy** – Ball In keeping with updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), effective Friday, March 4, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., we will no longer require students, faculty, staff, or visitors to wear face masks inside campus buildings and vehicles with limited exceptions outlined in the Student and Employee

Response Plans. President Geoffrey S. Mearns communicated this change in health and safety protocol to our campus community on Wednesday, March 2.

**Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – AI language models, such as ChatGPT, will probably offer very limited help for completing my assignments. However, you are welcome to use them under the following circumstances:

1. To help brainstorm or organize your initial thoughts or structure of a writing assignment—however, the final draft should be heavily edited with your own thoughts. Place in quotes any phrases or sentences that come directly from the AI tool, but avoid using more than a sentence or two of unmodified text. You should also do your best to fact check the AI output for accuracy.
2. You cite your use of AI language models, even if just used in an initial draft, as a source for your work. Follow the suggestion in the link below (i.e., mention how you used it and then cite it as a reference): <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt> Links to an external site.. Failing to cite use of AI language models is considered plagiarism and **subject to receiving reduced or no credit**.
3. It has not been stated that AI learning models is forbidden for a specific assignment. You are **not allowed** to use AI learning models for the following assignments:
  - - Virtual activities

If you are unsure about whether it is appropriate to use AI language models for an assignment, ask me about it.

**Late Assignments** – Assignments are submitted through Canvas by 11:59:59 pm on the due date given in the syllabus (unless otherwise noted). It is your responsibility to confirm that your assignment has uploaded (look on Canvas itself). If you have problems, notify me via email and attach the assignment. Late assignments will lose **10%** each day the assignment is late, up to **50%** (you can still turn it in later).

**Class Disruptions** – Punctuality and interaction are important for this class. Out of respect for other students, please do not carry on private conversations with others. Be sure to silence **electronic devices** and put away materials not related to the course. **Students with laptop computers (or other electronic devices) may be asked to put away the computers if they use them for purposes not directly and immediately related to this class.**

**Students with Disabilities** – If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State’s Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

**Writing** – It is expected that college graduates will write with proper organization, grammar, and spelling. Good writing is a skill and needs to be cultivated. The [Writing Center Links to an external site.](#) offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and more.

**Course Content Ownership** – As the course instructor, I retain the rights to all course content, including this syllabus. Students may not reproduce, distribute, or publicly post course materials without permission. **Students also may not record classes without explicit permission to do so.** Selling or distributing course materials may violate the Ball State Code of Contact and/or The Information Technology Users' Privileges and Responsibilities Policy. Any violations will be referred to the Director of Student Rights and Community Standards.

**BSU Diversity Statement** – Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism** – Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. The Student Academic Ethics Policy can be found under the Student Code in the Calendar of Events Handbook. Avoid plagiarism (representing someone else’s work as your own) by giving proper credit to the sources of the information you use. You should put quotation marks around direct quotes. Avoid cutting and pasting from the internet (or other sources), even if you use quotes—it is better for you to present the information with your own words and to cite the original source of the information itself.