

The Welfare State and Its Discontents

PLSC 21218

Monday, 3 PM to 5:50 PM

Cobb 119

Instructor: Steven Klein

Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:30 AM, Pick 422

Social policy and the future of the welfare state continue to be objects of heated political conflict. In this course, we will attempt to situate these contemporary debates in a broad historical and intellectual context, focusing on foundational attempts to understand the historical transformations grouped together by the term “welfare state.” We start with influential liberal and social democratic defenses of the post-war welfare state, before turning to the “discontents”: conservative, radical democratic, and feminist critiques of the welfare state. Questions we will consider include: What does it mean for a state to promote welfare? How does the pursuit of welfare relate to other political ideals, like freedom and democracy? How should the analysis of the welfare state be related to critical accounts of gender, race, and capitalism? Finally, we will examine the breakdown of the post-war political settlement and the challenges to the welfare state posed by the recent economic crisis.

Organization

This is a reading and discussion intensive seminar. So as to encourage productive discussion, enrollment will be capped at 20 students. You may not use laptop or tablet computers during discussion, and please silence your cellphone before class.

Readings

Students are required to purchase T. H Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Rights*; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, and F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*. All other readings will be available on Chalk.

Assignments

- Participation: Each student will be required to participate actively in class discussion. In addition, two students each week will be required to prepare a discussion question each for the session, to be emailed to the class by 9 PM Sunday night.
- Reading responses: Each student will be required to write three reading responses. Each response should be 2-3 pages long (double spaced, 12 point font, standard margins) and should grapple with one concept or question prompted by the reading. They are due at the start of class and will not be accepted late. You may only submit one reading response per class. The first response is due by the end of the 4th week, and the second is due by the end of 8th week.

- Final Paper: The final paper will be a 10-12 page paper on a topic developed in consultation with the instructor.

Grading

Participation: 30%, Reading Responses: 30% (10% each), Final Paper: 40%

Late papers will be deducted one half grade for each day late (i.e., B+ becomes B).

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class, unless you have a medical or compelling personal reason necessitating you miss it. If you do have such a reason, please contact me as soon as you know about it. An unexcused absence will lower your participation grade; repeated unexcused absences will severely affect it, up to a failing participation grade.

Plagiarism

Academic honesty requires you to hand in your own original work and to cite all sources you draw on while writing the paper, whether you quote it directly or not. Any breach of this requirement is a very serious matter. Plagiarism will lead to a failing grade for the course, as well as to disciplinary action by the College. Do not hesitate to talk to me if you have any question about the appropriate standards and about what it means to properly cite sources.

Week 1: Introduction

1. Garland, "The Welfare State: A Fundamental Dimension of Modern Government"

Week 2: Society Against the Market: Karl Polanyi

1. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 3-5, 35-80
2. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 136-140, 171-190, 201-209, 231-244, 257-268

Week 3: Social Citizenship: T. H. Marshall

1. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class*

Week 4: Liberal Egalitarianism: John Rawls

1. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3-15, 47-102, 228-292

Week 5: Freedom and the Welfare State: Friedrich Hayek

1. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, 47-54, 73-90, 148-166, 184-199, 308-328

2. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* 370-410, 417-421, 426-429, 430-437, 440-442, 451-465

Week 6: The Rise of the Social: Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault

1. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 22-78, 126-135, 212-220, 320-325
2. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 255-281
3. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, “Governmentality Lectures (1 February 1978, 5 April 1978),” 87-114, 331-361

Week 7: Critical Theory and the Welfare State: Jürgen Habermas

1. Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article”
2. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 343-373
3. Habermas, “The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies”, in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*, 48-71

Week 8: Gender, Race, and the Welfare State

1. Nancy Fraser, “Struggle over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late Capitalist Political Culture,” *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, 161-191
2. Orloff, “Gendering the Comparative Study of the Welfare State: An Unfinished Agenda,” *Sociological Theory* 27 (2009): 317-343
3. Lawrence M. Mead. “Citizenship and Social Policy: T.H. Marshall and Poverty.” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 14 (1997): 197-230.
4. Anna Marie Smith, *Welfare Reform and Sexual Regulation*, 53-85
5. Joe Soss, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram, *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*, 112-140

Week 9: Memorial Day, No Class

Week 10: Social Politics After the Crisis

1. Wolfgang Streeck, “The Crisis in Context: Democratic Capitalism and its Contradictions,” *Politics in an Age of Austerity*, 262-287.
2. Colin Crouch, “Privatized Keynesianism: An Unacknowledged Policy Regime”

Final Paper Due Friday, June 12th, 5 PM