



COURSE: Topics in Child Development and Social Policies – Rashmita Mistry

Course Overview: The societal contexts in which children and adolescents grow up shape all domains of their development, including their cognitive, academic, social, behavioral, physical and mental health. Contexts determine whom they meet and spend time with, where they go to school, how and with whom they spend their time when not at home, and what they see and experience on a daily basis. In this course, we focus on children's most proximal contexts – at home, in early childcare, and at school – and examine how social policies shape and affect the quality of children's experiences in these settings. We pay attention to what children and adolescents need to grow and thrive, examine how and to what extent policy-makers do, can, and should seek to meet the needs of diverse families and children in the United States, and draw upon social science research to evaluate and understand the effects of social and economic policies related to poverty, parental employment and family leave, child care, and extracurricular activities for children's well-being.

SOME CHILD AND FAMILY WEBSITES WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU:

Alliance for Early Success (<http://earlysuccess.org/>)
American Pediatrics Association (<http://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx>)
Brookings Institute (<http://www.brookings.edu/research/topics/social-policy>)
California First 5 (<http://www.cafc.ca.gov/>)
Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/>)
Center on the Developing Child (<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>)
Center for Law and Social Policy (<http://www.clasp.org/>)
Center on Media and Child Health (<http://www.cmch.tv/>)
Child and Family Blog (<http://childandfamilyblog.com/>)
Children Now (www.childrennow.org)
Children's Defense Fund (<http://www.childrensdefense.org/>)
Child Trends (www.childtrends.org/)
Consultative Group on Early Child Care and Development (<http://www.ecdgroup.com/>)
Economic Policy Institute (<http://www.epi.org/>)
Future of Children (<http://www.futureofchildren.org>)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (<http://www.naeyc.org/>)
National Center for Children in Poverty (<http://www.nccp.org>)
National Center for Homeless Education (<http://center.serve.org/nche/>)
Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewresearch.org/>)
UNICEF (<http://www.unicefusa.org/>)

REQUIRED & SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Required Text:

Gershoff, E. T., Mistry, R. S., & Crosby, D. C., Co-Editors. (2014). *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. Oxford University Press.

Additional Required Readings:

Other readings will be added to complement weekly contents. Website addresses will be provided and/or readings will be posted on the course website.

CORE REQUIRED CLASS ACTIVITIES AND POLICIES**Class Participation and Attendance:**

Lectures assume that you have done the assigned readings prior to class discussion; the lecture will usually build upon (not summarize) reading contents. Participation will be graded on the basis of class attendance, discussion, and in-class activities. Note: Your participation grade is not based on how much you talk per se during class time. Rather, you will be evaluated based on the amount of preparation your participation demonstrates, your understanding of course material, and how constructive your responses to others are.

In the News (Election) Assignment:

On November 8th, we (collectively) will elect the next President of the United States. As part of their “platform,” the candidates have particular views on a host of policies that have implications for families and children (e.g., raising the minimum wage, child care and family leave policies income tax proposals, health care policies, immigration, etc). In addition, in California we will also be electing State Senators and voting on a number of propositions (e.g., school bonds, gun violence, extending higher tax rates on the wealthy; for summary, see: <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-november-ballot-propositions-guide-20160630-snap-htmlstory.html>). Thus, for this assignment, students will identify a news article or story relating to either the national or state election pertaining to an issue related to children and families; bring a copy of the article to class and be prepared to engage in a conversation and discussion about it. Students are expected to be able to summarize the issue (and policy) being discussed and the implications for children and families. Students will also be asked to cast a “virtual vote” of the candidate or policy.

Due Dates (students will sign up for one time slot): Wednesday Oct. 19th or Monday Oct. 31st

Hot Topics Writing Assignment:

Child and family centered social policies are prominently featured in the media across many diverse forms and outlets (e.g., news stories, podcasts, blogs, opinion essays and editorials, magazine articles, TED Talks, etc). The goal of this assignment is to help you see linkages between social science research, policy, and public opinion. For the assignment, identify a current “hot topic” portrayed in the media that focuses on children and families and has social policy implications.

1. Briefly tell us why you chose to write about this topic (suggested 1-2 paragraphs)
2. Summarize the issue and identify the main claims made in the article or news story (suggested 2-3 paragraphs)
3. Make explicit and justify the significance of the topic for children’s development. That is, we want to see a connection between the topic and what we know about factors that promote or inhibit healthy and positive development in children and youth (suggested 2 pages).
4. In order to build your argument,

- draw on scientific sources to either support or refute the conclusions drawn in the article, and
 - cite a minimum of 3 empirical (i.e., research studies with data) articles in support of your argument.
5. Identify one existing social policy pertaining to the topic. Discuss its major components (e.g., funding levels and sources, access, eligibility criteria). Address if the policy is adequate for meeting the needs of children and families; if not, propose a solution. If no explicit policy currently exists, discuss what you think should be made available; again, consider funding levels and sources, access and eligibility criteria (suggested 1-2 pages).
 6. As a part of your conclusion, include a statement of your informed position/stance. Be sure your position is well-supported and justified (i.e., opinion informed by the evidence) (suggested 1-2 paragraphs).

Papers should be 5-6 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1" margins), not including references. ALL papers must be submitted through turnitin.com.

- Turn in a physical copy of the article you reviewed and/or email your assigned TA a working website link.
- If your paper exceeds the maximum length by more than half a page, there is an automatic 5-point deduction from your grade.
- You will be given one opportunity to revise and resubmit your paper, based on TA feedback. The grade you receive for your revised paper will be your final grade for the assignment. This may be the same as or higher than your original grade; in rare instances, it may be a grade lower than your initial submission.
- The decision to resubmit is optional. If you are satisfied with your initial grade, you are NOT required to submit a revised draft of your paper.
- The TA's take considerable time and effort to provide feedback on your papers. DO NOT turn in a 'rough draft.' Your goal should be to submit the best possible paper you can the first time. However, we know that academic writing can be challenging – especially if it is the first time you are completing such an assignment – and that despite your best effort at the time, revisions may be necessary. This is why we give you the option to revise and resubmit based on thorough feedback.

All students must get instructor or TA approval for their topic and article choice prior to the due date. To do so, students must meet with the instructor or one of the TAs during office hours by no later than Wednesday October 19th. Bring a hard copy of your article as well as two potential sources to the meeting.

Hot Topics Writing Assignment Due Dates:

- Check-in with instructor or TA's during office hours about paper topic ON OR BEFORE Wednesday Oct. 19th
- Final Paper due Wednesday, November 2nd by 12:30 PM
 - (Optional) Resubmission due Wednesday, November 30th by 12:30 PM

Written Examinations (5 quizzes)

In lieu of a traditional midterm(s) and final exam, you will be taking a series of quizzes throughout the quarter, including during Finals week. The quizzes will be some combination of short-answer, multiple

choice, and True/False questions and will be organized by topics – including readings, lectures, and in-class discussions. The quizzes are topical and not cumulative. You will be given the first 45 minutes of class to complete the quiz. Extra time will NOT be given, if you are late to class.

COURSE READINGS AND CALENDAR

Week 1 (Sept. 26th & 28th)

Welcome & Introduction

Topic: What Children Need to Grow & Thrive; Overview of Child & Family Support Policies

Homework Assignment:

Write a ½- to 1-page response to the article listed below. Come to Wednesday's class prepared to talk about the article and pose additional questions you would like to explore during small group discussions. Submit this through the Turnitin link on the class CCLE website. Your reaction papers will count toward your participation grade but will not be graded.

Hot Topics Homework Assignment Due – Wednesday, Sept. 28th by 10:00AM

Hot Topics Reading:

Miller, C. (2015). Class Differences in Child-Rearing Are on the Rise. The New York Times.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/18/upshot/rich-children-and-poor-ones-are-raised-verydifferently.html?mwrsrm=Email>

Readings for What Children Need to Grow & Thrive; Overview of Child & Family Support:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

<http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>

Week 2 (Oct. 3rd & 5th)

Topic: What Children Need to Grow & Thrive; Overview of Child & Family Support Policies

Continued Readings for What Children Need to Grow & Thrive; Overview of Child & Family Support
(Complete the following readings by Monday, Oct. 3rd):

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3, 1643-1647.

Cheng, V. (2002). Family under siege. *The News & Observer*. www.newsobserver.com (DUE: Monday)

Gershoff, E. T., Mistry, R. S., & Crosby, D. A. (2014). Introduction: Contextualizing Child Development. In *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. (pages xvii- xxvii).

Huston, A. C. (2014). Epilogue: The ecology of human development in the 21st Century. In *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. (pages 220-229).

Miller, C. (2015). Class Differences in Child-Rearing Are on the Rise. *The New York Times*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/18/upshot/rich-children-and-poor-ones-are-raised-verydifferently.html?mwrsrm=Email>

Week 3 (Oct. 10th & 12th)

Topics: Work-Family Balance: Parental Employment, Family Leave, and Child Care for Infants & Toddlers

Quiz #1 – Wednesday, Oct 12th (What Children Need; Overview of Child & Family Policies)
Writing Assignment Review; Library Resource & Writing Center Presentations – Wednesday, Oct 12th

Readings for Work-Family Balance: Parental Employment, Family Leave, and Child Care for Infants & Toddlers:

The Science of Early Childhood Development. Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.
http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/briefs/inbrief_series/inbrief_the_science_of_e_cd/

Ochshorn, S., & Skinner, C. (2012). Building a Competitive Future Right from the Start: How Paid Leave Strengthens 21st Century Families. National Center for Children in Poverty. Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, NY. http://www.nccp.org/projects/paid_leave_pubs.html

Week 4 (Oct. 17th & 19th)

Topics: Work-Family Balance: Parental Employment, Family Leave, and Child Care for Infants & Toddlers – continued; Early Child Care and Education (ECCE)

Continued Readings for Work-Family Balance: Parental Employment, Family Leave, and Child Care for Infants & Toddlers (Complete the following readings by Oct. 17th):

Reeves, R. (2016). How much paid parent leave do Americans really want? The Brookings Institute.
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2016/07/06/how-much-paid-parental-leave-doamericans-really-want/?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=es

Sifferlin, A. (2015). Why Netflix's Parental Leave Policy is Good for Babies. *Time Magazine*.
<http://time.com/3985933/why-netflixs-parental-leave-policy-is-good-for-babies/>

Venker, S. (2015). Netflix's New Parental Leave Policy Could Make Things Worse for Women. *Time Magazine*. <http://time.com/3986543/netflix-parental-leave-policy-women/>

Readings for Early Child Care and Education (ECCE):

O'Brien, M. et al., (2014). Women's work and child care: Perspectives and prospects. In Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy. (pages 37-53, chapter 3).

Zaslow, M., Crosby, D. A., & Smith, N. (2014). Issues of quality and access emerging from the changing early childhood policy context: Toward the next generation of research. In Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy. (pages 54-74, chapter 4).

Week 5 (Oct. 24th & 26th)

Topic: Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) - continued

Quiz #2 – Wednesday, Oct. 26th (Work-Family Balance)

Continued Readings for Early Child Care and Education (ECCE; Complete the following readings by Monday, Oct. 31st):

Public Consensus Statement on the Evidence Base on Preschool Education (2014).

<https://sites.google.com/site/ececonsensusletter/>

Early Learning: America's Middle Class Promise Begins Early (2014). U.S. Department of Education.

<http://www.ed.gov/early-learning>

Martin, C. (2016). Inside the Cutthroat Rivalry Between Two of L.A.'s Elite Preschools. The Los Angeles Magazine. <http://www.lamag.com/longform/inside-the-cutthroat-rivalry-between-two-elite-preschools/>

Mongeau, L. (2016). The never-ending struggle to improve Head Start. The Atlantic.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/is-head-start-a-failure/494942/>

Mongeau, L. (2016). What Boston's preschools get right. The Atlantic.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/what-bostons-preschools-get-right/493952/>

Week 6 (Oct. 31st & Nov 2nd)

Topics: Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) continued; Schooling & Afterschool Care

Hot Topics Paper due Wednesday, November 2nd by 12:30 PM

Readings for Schooling and Afterschool Care:

Christensen, K., Schneider, B., & Butler, D. (2011). Families with school-age children. Future of Children, 21(2), 69-90.

Smith, Grace (2015). CDC Early School Start Times Detrimental to Teens Wellbeing. Education News.

<http://www.educationnews.org/k-12-schools/cdc-earlier-school-start-times-detrimental-to-teen-wellbeing/>

Lee, R. (2016). How teachers may be failing students with excessive homework. CBS News.
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/homework-excessive-amount-effect-children-lisa-damour/>

Crosnoe, R. & Leventhal, T. (2014). School- and neighborhood-based interventions to improve the lives of disadvantaged children. In *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. (pages 156-174, chapter 10).

Hannah-Jones, N. (2016). Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City. *The New York Times*.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/12/magazine/choosing-a-school-for-my-daughter-in-a-segregatedcity.html>

See also related This American Life podcast:

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radioarchives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with>

Week 7 (Nov. 7th & 9th) REMEMBER TO VOTE – November 8th Topic: Schooling & Afterschool Care continued

Quiz #3 – Wednesday, November 9th (ECCE)

Week 8 (Nov. 14th & 16th)

Topic: Inequality and Childhood Poverty

Readings for Inequality and Childhood Poverty:

Reeves, R. V. (2014). Saving Horatio Alger: Equality. Opportunity. And the American dream. The Brookings Institute. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2014/saving-horatio-alger#>

TEDTalk 2011- How Economic Inequality Harms Societies

Badger, E. (July 2015). Rich people, surrounded by other rich people, think the U.S. is richer than it really is.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonkblog/wp/2015/07/28/rich-people-surrounded-by-other-rich-people-think-america-is-richer-than-it-really-is/>

Lauter, D. (2016). How do Americans view poverty? *Los Angeles Times*.

<http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-napol-poverty-poll/>

Mistry, R. S., Nenadal, L., Griffin, K., Zimmerman, F. J., Cochran, H., Thomas, C., & Wilson, C. (in press, 2016). Children's reasoning about poverty, economic mobility, and helping behavior: Results of a curriculum intervention in the early school years. *Journal of Social Issues: Education Inequality: Opportunity and Mobility*, 72, 756-784.

Week 9 (Nov. 21st & 23rd)

Topic: Inequality and Childhood Poverty - continued

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 23RD - THANKSGIVING BREAK

Quiz #4 – Monday, Nov. 21st (Schooling & Afterschool Care)

Week 10 (Nov. 28th & 30th)

Topics: Inequality and Childhood Poverty - continued

Wrap Up

Hot Topics Paper Resubmissions due Wednesday, November 30th by 12:30PM

Continued Readings for Inequality and Childhood Poverty:

McLoyd, V., Mistry, R. S., & Hardaway, C. R. (2014). Poverty and children's development: Familial processes as mediating influences. In *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. (pages 109-124, chapter 7).

Being Poor Affects Kids' Brains, Study Finds <http://www.nbcnews.com/health/kids-health/being-poor-affects-kidsbrains-study-finds-n332661>

Weisner, T. S. & Duncan, G. (2014). The world isn't linear, additive or decontextualized: Pluralism and mixed methods in understanding the effects of antipoverty programs on children and parenting. In *Societal Contexts of Child Development: Pathways of Influence and Implication for Practice and Policy*. (pages 125 – 140, chapter 8).

Gassman-Pines, A. & Hill, Z. (2013). How social safety net programs affect family economic well-being, family functioning, and children's development. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7, 172–181.

Paquette, D. (2016). The people taking care of American children live in poverty. *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-child-care-poverty-20160711-snap-story.html>

Lee, D. (2016). Median incomes are up and poverty rate is down, surprisingly strong census figures show. *Los Angeles Times*. <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-household-incomes-poverty-20160913-snap-story.html>