This course is an elective on public policies designed to invest in children’s development or to protect children from harm. Many, but not all, of these policies focus on economically disadvantaged children and attempt to address socioeconomic and racial inequalities. The class will cover the contexts of child well-being, the arguments for government intervention during childhood, and 4-5 specific topics in child policy. In doing so, we will integrate theory and knowledge from Developmental Psychology, Economics, Sociology, and Social Neuroscience. Our focus will be U.S. Federal, state, and local policies. The readings and discussion will relate to interventions across childhood, but there is a greater emphasis on early than middle or late childhood. We will engage both mainstream and critical perspectives on policies.

Our key organizing questions are:
1) What are the key domains and contexts for child development?
2) What are the arguments for government intervention during childhood, or for the benefits of investing in children?
3) What are the areas of policy designed to directly and indirectly benefit children?
4) What does research evidence tell us about the success or failure of policies focused on children?
5) What are the political and practical challenges to promoting child well-being with government policy?

COURSE STRUCTURE AND NORMS

This is a hybrid lecture/discussion course. In each class period, I will give a short lecture and we will spend time in both full-group and small-group discussion. Our discussions with each other about the readings will be the primary strategy for learning.

We are one of the first classes to try out a new active learning classroom at UW, Mary Gates 058. UW is very interested in knowing what does and does not work about the classroom for our type of class. We will attempt to take full advantage of the moveable tables and chairs, the state-of-the-art technology, and the mobile white boards for our interactive class.

1 The professor reserves the right to change this syllabus at any time during the quarter and to notify you of any changes.
There is a lot of discussion these days about creating *safe* classroom environments. What seems like an innocuous question or comment to one student can be off-putting, offensive or marginalizing to another. We all need to be willing to say difficult or unpopular things, to know that our words have power, and to endeavor to understand each other without judgement. I hope that we can create a *safe* and *brave* classroom environment. To do that, I hope that we will re-read, and strive to realize, the Evans School Conversation Norms.

**Evans School Conversation Norms**

At the Evans School, we value the richness of our differences and how they can greatly enhance our conversations and learning. As a professional school, we also have a responsibility to communicate with each other—inside and outside of the classroom—in a manner consistent with conduct in today’s increasingly diverse places of work. We hold ourselves individually and collectively responsible for our communication by:

- Listening carefully and respectfully
- Sharing and teaching each other generously
- Clarifying the intent and impact of our comments
- Giving and receiving feedback in a “relationship-building” manner
- Working together to expand our knowledge by using high standards for evidence and analysis

In addition, I hope that we can all commit to self-reflection about how our opinions and reactions are shaped by background and identity. Our discussions will be richer if we are all working hard to notice and call attention to our own biases.

Outside of class, I will make myself available to you both in person and by email. I have regular weekly office hours, and I am happy to schedule meetings at alternative times that work for your schedule. I endeavor to respond to emails promptly. In return, I expect that your emails are written professionally (no “hey” “sup” “lol” etc.) and that you set up an appointment if your question or concern is lengthy or will require a lengthy response.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Your grade in this course will consist of the following:

- Participation: 30%
- Short response papers & discussion questions (2): 30%
- Final policy proposal: 40%

**Participation** includes attendance, coming to class prepared, asking questions or making comments during lecture, contributing to small group activities, and leading discussion in the weeks that you write a response paper. Class time will consist mostly of discussion of the readings. Each student’s active participation in the class is critical to its success. My expectations for an A grade on participation are that you come prepared to discuss the readings; are present and engaged in the
discussion (no emailing, texting, etc… in class), and are respectful and professional to me and your fellow students.

Each student will sign up to write 2 **reading response papers & discussion questions** during the quarter. Response papers and discussion questions are due electronically on the Sunday before class by 5pm. In the weeks that you write response papers & discussion questions, you will have a greater responsibility in class for facilitating discussion. More details on this assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

The **final policy proposal** is your chance to develop an argument for a particular policy relevant to child well-being. The final policy proposal is due electronically by 5pm on March 16th. More details on this assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

Assignments will be deducted 0.5 grades for each day they are late. In the case of illness or other unexpected circumstances, a reasonable extension of a due date can be requested via email up until the day before the due date (but not on or after the due date).

In this course, evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero grade on the relevant assignment and a scheduled discussion between the student, the professor, and Student Services. Cheating includes not doing your own work (when you are expected to), such as copying from another student’s assignment or exam, using notes when it is prohibited, using an electronic device when it is prohibited, and getting an advance copy of assignments. Plagiarism is using another’s ideas or words without proper citation.

**TOPICS AND READINGS**

There is one required book: **GORMELY, W.T. (2012) Voices for children: Rhetoric and public policy.** Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. The book is available for purchase at the UW Bookstore and online. All other required and optional readings are posted on CANVAS.

**Week 1. Introduction**

1/5/16

Required readings:

- Gormley, Chapter 1.

**Week 2. Introduction to child development**

1/12/16

Required readings:


Optional readings:

**Week 3. Defining child policy**

1/19/16

Required readings:

Optional readings:
• Gormely, Chapters 5-7

**Week 4. Rationales for government intervention during childhood**

1/26/16

Required readings:
• Gormely, Chapters 2-4

Optional readings:
• Convention on the Rights of Children:  

**Week 5. Policy Area 1: Increasing family income**  2/2/16

Related policies: Earned Income Tax Credits, minimum wage, health insurance, welfare, disability insurance.

Required readings:


Optional readings:

• What is the EITC? http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/key-elements/family/eitc.cfm
• Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality Podcast on Refashioning Income Supports for Children in Poverty. Available on Canvas.

**Week 6. Policy Area 2: Improving infant health and development**  2/9/16

Related policies: Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), state Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) programs, state paid family leave programs, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, immunization programs, home visiting programs

Required readings:

- Read FAQ about Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program: 

Optional readings:
- Video “Welcome to WIC: California WIC.”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_9w2X1AMqM

**Week 7. Policy Area 3: Protecting children from abuse and neglect  2/16/16**

Visitor: Frank Edwards, UW doctoral student in sociology.

Related policies: child welfare, foster care, transition out of foster care

Required readings:

Optional readings:

**Week 8. Policy Area 4: Promoting school readiness  2/23/16**

Related policies: state and local preschool programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, parenting programs, child care subsidies

Required readings:


SKIM material on at least 1 of these 2 local interventions:


Optional readings:


Week 9. Policy Area 5: TBD 3/1/16

You will vote for one of four possible topics for our final policy area:

1. Youth violence prevention
2. Immigration policy and children
3. Hunger and food assistance
4. K-12 educational reform

Week 10. Directions for Future Policy 3/8/16

Required readings:

• GORMELY, Chapter 8

Choose 2 of the following:


• Whatever it takes. A white paper on the Harlem Children’s Zone. September 1, 2009.


• Toxic Stress overview from Center on the Development Child, Harvard University: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/
Response Paper & Discussion Questions Assignment  
*Due to Canvas by 5pm on the Sunday before class*

You are required to complete two response papers during the quarter. You will sign up for the weeks in which you want to submit a response paper. I will grade response papers on a 4.0 scale and the average of the two papers will comprise 30% of your total grade in this class.

If you have a good reason for being unable to complete your response paper in the assigned week, you must get approval from me prior to the due date to change weeks. Late papers will be deducted one-half grade (0.5) per day past due.

Assignment

1. **Response paper.** Write a 2-page (double-spaced; 12-pt font; 1-inch margins) response to the week’s required readings. The paper must synthesize and comment on the ideas of at least two different authors. The best response papers make 1 or 2 key points that bridge ideas in multiple readings. Submit a Microsoft Word version of your paper to Canvas. Under the “Assignments” tab in Canvas, click on “Response paper #1” or “Response Paper #2.” Choose your .doc or .docx file and click “Submit.”

2. **Discussion questions.** Please come up with 2-3 questions about the readings that you think would spark an interesting discussion in a small group. Those questions should be posted to the “Discussion Qs Week #” discussion board on Canvas.

Source Material
You can reference optional or outside readings, or observations based on personal experiences, but your response paper should focus on 2 of the required readings.

Be sure that you acknowledge, through proper citation, the authors whose ideas you use in constructing your response. Use parenthetical citations & a reference page. Either APA or Chicago style are fine, but be consistent.

The University of Washington and the Evans School take plagiarism very seriously. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero grade and a discussion between the student, the instructor, and the student services staff. More common than blatant plagiarism of exact text are problems with using someone else’s ideas without proper citation. I will grade down for insufficient or inappropriate citation of sources. Be careful to differentiate between quotation and paraphrasing. *Quotations should be used sparingly,* whereas paraphrasing an author’s ideas in your own words should be much more common. Both require a citation, but you only need to provide a page number for a direct quotation.
Final Paper Assignment
*Due to Canvas at 5pm PT on Tuesday March 15, 2016*

Write a policy proposal to Governor Jay Inslee for a new or modified policy relevant to child well-being. The policy should be plausibly implementable at the state level. New policies can be untried or imported from another state. If you propose to change an existing policy in Washington State, it should be a substantial change (e.g. expanding or scaling up; or redesigning the policy in some way).

Your policy proposal must address the following areas:
1) Your rationale for the policy
2) Research evidence supporting the policy
3) Planned administrative structure (if appropriate)
4) Anticipated challenges (political, logistical, or other)

Formatting Requirements
- 1-paragraph executive summary, single spaced.
- 5 pages double-spaced (not including the executive summary and reference list), with a reasonable 12-point font and 1-inch margins.
- Minimal spelling, typographical, and grammatical mistakes.

Source Material
The paper should illustrate your mastery of the class materials. You should draw on multiple sources from the required course readings. You can also use outside sources.

Be sure that you acknowledge, through proper citation, the authors whose ideas you use in constructing your response. Use parenthetical citations & a reference page. Either APA or Chicago style are fine, but be consistent.

The University of Washington and the Evans School take plagiarism very seriously. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero grade and a discussion between the student, the instructor, and the student services staff. More common than blatant plagiarism of exact text are problems with using someone else’s ideas without proper citation. I will grade down for insufficient or inappropriate citation of sources. Be careful to differentiate between quotation and paraphrasing. Quotations should be used sparingly, whereas paraphrasing an author’s ideas in your own words should be much more common. Both require a citation, but you only need to provide a page number for a direct quotation.

Submitting your Paper
An electronic copy (Microsoft Word format) of your paper is due to me by 5pm PT on Tuesday March 15, 2016. The paper should be submitted on Canvas, via the “assignments” tab. I will grade your paper on a 4.0 scale; it is worth 45% of your final grade in this class.