

## Soc 315: Foundations of Social Welfare (Fall 2020)

<https://people.eou.edu/socwelf>

**Class time/location:** 'remote' (Fall 2020)  
**Instructor:** Bill Grigsby, Department of Anthropology/Sociology  
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**Office hours:** Mon 9-10 (email); Th 9-10 (Zoom)

**Course catalog description:** This is a writing intensive course. Analysis of the concept of social welfare including an introduction to the nature of government and voluntary programs and the services provided by them, as well as their theory, principles and methods.

### Learning outcomes

1. A sociological perspective on the historical context of social welfare in the United States.
2. Familiarity with the various types of social welfare programs and policies.
3. A better grasp of some important political issues surrounding social welfare and reform.
4. A robust understanding of relationships between inequality, social stratification and poverty.
5. An understanding of the connections between welfare assistance and low-wage work.
6. A greater sensitivity to portrayal of welfare-related issues in mass media.

Social welfare can be broadly defined as social intervention designed to enhance or maintain human welfare. That's pretty broad, and could include things like police and fire services. Most of the time we limit this to interventions designed to improve the lives or situations of the distressed and the disadvantaged. You can probably think of various populations that would meet these requirements—people and families falling below the poverty line, victims of natural disasters, refugees seeking asylum from political persecution, migrant farm workers, disabled persons, the elderly, parolees from corrections, the unemployed, people without housing, children who've been removed from their homes, AIDS patients, veterans of war, victims of sexual assault, people suffering from mental illness, etc. For each of these groups of people, there may be public, private or non-profit resources, agencies or programs available to help meet their needs. Social welfare is also a politically charged arena, especially in the U.S. where many believe that individuals are responsible for their own circumstances in life, and government shouldn't be in the business of providing 'handouts.' Others say that many people are in fact the victims of unresponsive, distorted or underfunded government policies that reflect the power of wealthy elite groups and corporations with greater political influence over decision makers. You will finish this class with a clearer understanding of the context within which social welfare services are developed and delivered, the history behind their growth and evolution, and the kinds of services, professions, and populations that make up, use and administer social welfare programs.

### Required text (available at the EOU bookstore):

- Annette Lareau. 2012. *Unequal Childhoods*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Numerous additional readings will be assigned and available online and through Canvas.

### Requirements

- Purchase the text book, complete assigned readings as posted.
- Complete assignments as described, including discussion threads, small group discussions in Zoom, quizzes, a term paper, and a project to identify and describe social welfare resources
- You'll need access to a computer and the Internet—I'll communicate via e-mail or in Canvas. There is also a course Web site (<https://people.eou.edu/socwelf>) that will include a variety of content and resources, you'll need to familiarize yourself with it.
- Keep in touch—if you're missing from class, you need to let me know what's up.
- There are some password-protected course readings, and Canvas is the easiest place to access them.

## Class format

The class will be discussion-intensive, and the topics week-to-week. It's important to stay caught up.

## Important Dates

Refer to the [course website](https://people.eou.edu/socwelf/calendar-remote/) (https://people.eou.edu/socwelf/calendar-remote/)

## Assignments

Assignment	Points possible	Total pts
Discussion forums (every two weeks)	5 x 25 pts	125
Writing in discussion forums (proofread)	5 x 5 pts	25
Quizzes (two, open book, one at end of wk 5, the other at end of wk 10)	2 x 50 pts	100
Small group discussion (Zoom): Topical responses (wks 2,4 7,9,10)	5 x 25 pts	125
Paper reflecting on your welfare philosophy (Dec 6)	100 pts	100
Identify and describe two welfare-related resources (at latest by Dec 1)	25 pts	25
<b>Totals</b>		<b>500</b>

## Assignment descriptions

### Discussion forums

**Purpose:** To gauge your progress in learning the material.

**Description:** There will be five of these, and each will cover two weeks of material (weeks 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10). You'll be responding to prompts I provide, designed to get you to think about the reading material and the key concepts from class, in the readings and other assigned source material (such as my online lecture pages). Readings will thus be organized in two week blocks—in other words, you'll be assigned readings for weeks 5-6 together. This will allow you to begin thinking about the prompts and complete the readings in sufficient time to respond. The prompts will be available Sunday before the week starts, and will be due, Sunday evening at the end of the two week period (for example, weeks 5-6 will open Sunday evening before week 5 begins, and be due by Sunday evening at the end of week 6). Obviously we can discuss the prompts in our weekly in-person sessions, too. Hopefully those sessions are question-driven, which would be more useful than me making assumptions about how these sessions are most useful to students.

**Expectations:** Because these are discussion threads, not posting threads, I expect you will respond with your own ideas to the prompt, and also play off of other students' responses. In other words, engage in *discussion*. If you approach it as a requirement to be fulfilled, you may find it punitive. If you treat it as intended—as an important interactive component in your learning about social welfare—it will help you consolidate your learning, one component of which is being able to communicate it to someone else.

*Avoid procrastination.* This part of the course isn't something you can fulfill at the last second. You'll be expected to participate in both weeks of the thread(s, likely 2-3 of them).

There are several kinds of postings that can gain you credit:

- You can pose a question for the group, and then try to answer it or explain why you asked it (posing a question without taking a stab at responding would represent minimal effort).
- You can provide other research or web resources you've found that shed light on a subject we've discussing.
- You can summarize a long discussion thread and try to distill it down to one or a few issues.
- You can reply to others' postings—either agreeing or disagreeing, the main thing is that you provide evidence and some logical argument to back up what you're saying.

- The key is, show me more than your opinion on something—Unsupported statements don't demonstrate that you're intellectually engaged in the course content.

**Evaluation:** Each 2 week set of discussion threads is worth 30 points—25 for the substance, and 5 for the writing (if you have participated in each of the threads, and your writing is readable and seems to have been proofread with respect to grammar, spelling and coherence, you'll likely receive all 5 points).

Points for substance will be based on the following criteria:

- *Your ability to reflect on the questions or the readings/lecture material.* To receive full credit, you need to show you've not only been through the readings, but understood them and used them as evidence to support your views. If all readers can see is opinion seemingly uninformed by course material, your points will reflect that. You don't have to agree with the material in class, but you do need to demonstrate you read it and made a good faith effort to understand it.
- *Your grasp of the topic.* You don't necessarily need to show mastery of each reading or topic, but you do need to ask questions where you're unclear to clarify your understanding and show me you're putting effort into understanding the material. Again, if you try to do this without referring to the readings or lecture material, I won't even know if you've read it. So 'I don't get it' won't garner you many points—it shows no effort on your part to try to 'get it.'
- *Your ability to communicate your ideas.* I would like to see good, organized writing. Complete sentences, spell-checked, and all that. If you're citing something, do it correctly, give us a web page. 'I agree' is okay, as long as it's followed by a well-reasoned explanation of why you agree with a previous post (again, citing evidence).
- *Bringing in outside materials.* I encourage this, but if you do it you need to have evaluated these materials. If it's the first .com site you found on Google, I'll let you know if I think it's a suspect source.

*150 possible points total (5 x 25, plus 25 possible points for writing (5 x 5))*

## **Writing in discussion forums**

Blame it on previous classes if you like, but over five years ago (I blame txtspk). You will have to demonstrate college-level writing in the two papers and in discussion forums. You can receive up to five points each week for writing in the discussion forums. This means you need to proofread your posts, check for spelling errors, capitalize, all that basic grammar-related stuff, and make sure that they make sense, to receive the full five points each week (you will see a separate grade item for this in Canvas). A '5' means your posts are in order, make sense, thoughts are well-organized, and you've probably done some proofreading before hitting the 'submit' button. A '4' means you've probably done some proofreading, but there are still some pretty glaring errors. '3' means it's not really clear you've proofread the posts for the week. A '1' or '2' indicates your posts have so many errors in them that they're hard to follow, and in any case readers may not take them as seriously. Also . . . if there are two main threads for the week and you only post in one of them, the maximum you can receive for writing points is a '3.'

I'm mainly doing this because writing is just so critical to finding work, communicating with prospective employers, and we all need to show some self-awareness and mindfulness about how we do it. For those as yet unaware of this—and as long as old school fogies like me are still around—it will pay off for you. The writing points will show up as a separate grade for each week of the course,

*5 points possible per week, 50 points total for the term.*

## **Making up a discussion forum (you're entitled to two of these)**

Make-up is designed for those who've missed a week—so do not go back in after a discussion thread has been graded and post—you'll have to use the following guidelines. I will accept make-ups until Sept 6, but you can

complete and submit them at any point in the term. Papers should be *no longer than 4 pages, double-spaced* (11 or 12 pt font) in length. There will be a place to submit them directly in Canvas. This is how I would like you to structure the make-ups:

1. What for you were the *most important points* that you took from the *readings, discussion and lecture material* for the week? This is an exercise in abstract thinking—what is the ‘big picture?’ You should touch on each reading assignment, discuss any common threads between them, or differences. I want to see what you got out of the readings and the week’s topic, and gauge your depth of understanding. I’m not looking for book reports here—do some summary, but your paper should be no more than 1/3 summary (and no less than 2/3 analysis).
2. *Demonstrate you read the discussion forum.* I don’t need a play-by-play blow of people’s postings, I just want you to demonstrate you went through the postings, and got something out of the process. How did people respond to the material for the week? What was your take? Just keep in mind—take a stand, but *don’t make points if you’re not going to support them with evidence or logic.*
3. *Standards.* This is making up for your having missed the discussion boards, so I expect the same amount of intellectual effort to go into the make-up. Good writing, use of complete sentences, paragraphs to change ideas, citing of authors’ works at the end. You can submit it to Canvas, just make sure you specify which week you’re making up.
4. *Strategy.* If you have to choose, make up the week where you have the most points to potentially gain. This sounds pretty straightforward, but you’d be surprised how many people will do one of these to get from a ‘15’ to an ‘20’ (out of 25). Use this to get from a ‘0’ to a ‘25’.

Points for making up discussions will show up in Canvas for the week you’re making up, so make sure and specify which week, and make sure that you respond to any and all prompts (threads) for the week.

## Quizzes

**Purpose:** This is how I evaluate your learning from the readings and discussion we do. During week 6 and week 10 we’ll have timed, open-book quizzes in Canvas.

**Description:** Each will be based on the assigned readings and lecture material (but *not* the small group subject matter). There will be 5 to 10 questions, either short answer, multiple choice, or short essay. Each quiz will be worth 50 points, and you will have three hours to complete. And they’re open book (however, you will want to enter prepared and knowing where the information is that will help you).

**Expectations:** The week 6 quiz will be made available Saturday at noon, October 31, and you’ll have until Tuesday (Nov 3) at midnight to complete it. The final quiz will be available Saturday after week 10 (Dec 5) and you will have until Tuesday (Dec 8) by midnight to complete it.

Again, *these are open-book*, but the answers won’t be readily available—you’ll have to think through the questions. They will be based on material from the readings and lecture material online.

*Quizzes will be worth 20% of your overall grade (50 pts/quiz x 2), 100 points*

## Small group discussion

**Purpose:** To encourage interaction around topics related to the course material

**Description:** We’ll do discussion in small groups mostly on Fridays (for weeks 2, 4, 7 and 10), but on Monday of week 9 (Nov 23). We will generally take a topic of current interest and discuss it in small groups in Zoom.

**Expectations:** The class will be given a set of questions the night before, students will be assigned to breakout sessions in Zoom. You need to respond to the questions and submit them by the end of the period. This means someone will need to serve as a ‘scribe,’ to translate your group’s discussion into responses to the questions. See the [guidelines](#) for more detail on expectations.

***If you miss a discussion group session:***

You can make up **one** missed session if you turn in an extended abstract (1-2 pages) within a week of the date it was due, which includes your answers to the questions groups responded to in class. I will post the questions after the small group class period. Respond to these (following the directions), and paste in your abstract. You can do one of these over the course of the term. Make-ups are due by no later than one week after the date you missed, you can submit to me via email attachment.

Otherwise, there's not much point in small group work if you're turning stuff in from home at midnight.

*125 points possible (5 x 25)*

**Making up small group discussions**

Should you miss Friday's discussion with an excused absence, you have the possibility of making it up. If you notify me in advance, you can write an expanded reflection paper, following the [guidelines below](#). You can also make it up afterwards, but you only have a week (you can turn it in no later than two weeks late for possible half credit). After the first absence, though, you'll begin to lose points for not being present to participate in the discussion.

Send make-ups to my email as file attachments.

Make-up papers should be **no longer than 3 pages, double-spaced** (11 or 12 pt font) in length. The following describes how to structure the reflection papers:

1. *What for you were the most important points* that you took from the readings and discussion for the Friday topic (do *not* use the regular readings for the week)? This is an exercise in abstract thinking—what is the 'big picture?' You should touch on each article, discuss common threads between them, focus on the discussion of the articles, Describe what you got out of the readings and the week's topic, and gauge your depth of understanding. No book reports here—do some summary, but your paper should be no more than 1/3 summary (and no less than 2/3 analysis).
2. *Critically evaluate the authors' arguments*. Do you agree or disagree with what they said? Remember to read with a critical Don't be afraid to question the authors' reasoning or evidence, or to use your own experiences or background to offer other views. Just keep in mind—take a stand, but ***don't make points if you're not going to support them with evidence or logic***.
3. *Questions*. I will send you the questions groups responded to in class, and you will need to respond to You can use points you've made previously to do this, as long as they seem appropriate and relevant to the questions. Plan to spend an hour and a half on this—time writing the summary/analysis, and responding to the group questions (about the same amount of time you would have spent had you attended class and submitted the abstract).

**Reflection paper—What's your philosophy and where did it come from?**

**Purpose:** To prompt you to think about social welfare, whether you seek to pursue a related career, or just live in a welfare state where income and wealth inequality are on the rise, and the population is aging.

**Description:** You'll be asked to do a few things on the reflection paper. **First**, I want you to discuss and analyze your closest personal brushes with the welfare system. This could be as a recipient of various kinds of services (and you need to think broadly, ask if in doubt, about what might constitute welfare), SSI, SNAP, reduced fare lunches, a trip to the food bank, WIC, TANF, Social Security payments, Medicaid, veterans' benefits, workers' compensation, unemployment, etc. Services don't necessarily have to be public—they could come from non-profits, from a church or other religious entity, etc. Put some effort and thought into this part, and describe the details of accessing services, your interactions with agencies, time frames, etc.

It's also possible that you've had few if any brushes with the welfare system. But you still should have some familiarity with it, sources of information that have informed your views. Maybe you've had friends who've received assistance, maybe your parents or relatives, maybe it's just what you've read about or seen on TV, what you've gleaned from books, heard on talk radio, or with brushes with homeless people in a big city, etc., but you have some familiarity, and I'm interested in just how close and intimate you have come to the welfare system. In this part of the paper, I'm looking for thoughtfulness, description, and your impressions, given what we discuss in this class. In other words, you should have some insight into your experiences based on whatever contact you've had with welfare services (or lack of), guided by course content. You should spend *at least a page on this part*. This part is *worth 30 points*.

**Second**, I want you to think about your own philosophy of welfare—the role of government, of the private sector, need-based versus insurance programs, your attitudes about people on welfare, poverty, the level of benefits available, perceptions of welfare fraud, accountability, race/ethnicity/class/gender, etc.

To do this you obviously need to define what you mean by welfare—this is a multidimensional concept, and I expect to see some thoughtfulness in your definition and description. Again, this should take at least a page of fluff-free writing. *Worth 40 points*.

**Third**, I want you to reflect on how your own experiences, whether frequent or very limited, have affected your attitudes on welfare. In other words, I want to know where your attitudes come from. If you haven't given it much thought, you need to state that, and perhaps explore any disconnects between your experiences and your own philosophy. You also should incorporate this class into your response—how has it affected your own thinking about welfare?

The broader idea of this assignment is to give you some space to explore how you formulate opinions on important issues—through reading, personal direct experience, interactions with other people, work experiences, religious or cultural background, the mass media, etc. So I want to know: 1) What are the bases of your opinions/attitudes about welfare? Are they anchored in any personal values you hold? 2) Have your attitudes changed over time? As you are confronted with new information, do you re-consider your opinions and values? 3) Do you think it's important for those working in the welfare system to have a thoughtful philosophy about welfare? Or is it enough that they just perform according to their job descriptions? What would the three most important areas, according to you, that welfare professionals should have developed some thoughtful opinions? Put some thought into this one, at least a page of fluff-free thought. *Worth 30 points*.

**Expectations:** I'm expecting a 4-6 page paper. This paper is worth 100 points, and you're being asked to justify and support your attitudes and opinions, using readings, philosophies from class or elsewhere, etc. This is *not* an opinion paper—it is a *reflection* paper, you need to reflect on your attitudes and beliefs, and where those attitudes and beliefs come from, and perhaps how they have been affected by your exposure to some of the material from this course (or not). *Please do not submit a paper uninformed by your time and intellectual effort spent in this class*. Re-read the previous sentence as needed. And 4-6 pages means no room for fluff.

*100 points possible, due Dec 6 (by midnight) in Canvas*

## Resources (for social welfare)

**Purpose:** To contribute to providing high-quality information related to the field of social welfare. You may have noticed the [resources page](#) in the website menu--it needs work.

**Description:** Each student will be asked to identify two resources, describe each (including providing websites, origins), and submit them to be included on the resources page. We'll share in class, so that we're not duplicating. I would encourage you to follow your interests on this, whether that be issues related to children, to teens, to law enforcement, mental health, addiction and recovery, domestic/interpersonal violence, criminal justice, school-related services and support, elder care, issues related to food and food security, housing and housing security, careers in social work and welfare, etc.

**Expectations:** That you put some thought and effort into this, and choose two sources that will be useful for all of us and future students. You need to write up each site, at least a page/page and a half for each. Keep in mind that many sites you might consider will be .org or .edu sites. If you choose .com sites, they need to be justified as providing useful and credible information, from credible sources.

**Evaluation:** When you finish--there is no specific due date (but Dec 1 at the latest), so you can get this out of the way early in the term if you like--lots going on later so I would recommend not putting it off. I will evaluate this assignment based on your choices, your write-ups of each source, and the level of effort you demonstrated.

*25 points possible*

## Grading procedures

*'The A students get hired by the B students, who end up working for the C students.'* Al McGuire

Grading is based on a straight percentage:

90-100%	450-500	A
80-89%	400-449	B
70-79%	350-399	C
60-69%	300-349	D
Below 60%	< 300	F

Minuses will be given for the bottom third (0-3) of each range; pluses for the top third (7-9). I will use pluses and minuses to help if I feel that one's grade did not reflect his/her effort; I will not use them to reduce a grade.

## Policies, expectations

The university's official position: Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found guilty of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or theft of an examination or supplies) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the university, or being expelled from the university—or a combination of these (see section II of the 2002-03 Student Handbook, p. 32ff, and p. 41 ff). The Library links to general resources on plagiarism (from [WSU](#)), on [identifying and avoiding plagiarism](#), and on taking a ['self-test'](#) (Pomona College). Use these if you're not clear about expectations.

*My interpretation:* Plagiarism is taking credit for work, ideas, papers, that are not yours. Universities make lots of literature available for a nominal fee, the bargain being that if you use the ideas of others, you'll credit them. So it isn't just wholesale theft, but as the above says, deception, misrepresentation, etc. Be sure you're familiar with what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. If you're caught plagiarizing, you'll receive an 'F' on the assignment and possibly for the course. So if you're having problems in class, please come see me before you turn to the Web . . .

### Due dates and late assignments

Assignments are expected on the day they're due. Late assignments will be assessed a penalty. Please use Canvas to submit. If you have extenuating circumstances for being late, I'm always willing to listen. But in fairness to others who've managed to submit them on time, it will have to be compelling.

*Note: Class schedule and assignments may be adjusted during the course of the term as needed.*

### Expectations

I will justify my discussion and reading material, assignments, etc., by showing their relevance to the overall course objectives. I will provide a friendly and civil environment for discussion of ideas, provide a safe atmosphere for free thought, and make every effort to be accessible, approachable, clear and precise about course expectations. With respect to coverage of content, I tend to emphasize depth over breadth—I would

rather cover less points thoroughly, at a reasonable and engaging pace, than pledge strict allegiance to a course schedule.

In turn I expect students are enrolled in the class *to learn*. Students will do their own work, clearly demonstrate effort to learn, use or develop critical thinking skills and be able to express them on paper or in class discussion, ‘speak up’ when unclear or in disagreement on a concept, either exhibit college-level writing skills or seek help to improve them. I’ll look for progress in developing abstract thinking skills and students’ abilities to focus on the “big picture”—key concepts delivered in class, their relevance to course material, the real world, etc.—and to be able to identify these phenomena and formulate informed ideas about them in real-life settings.

I’m looking for evidence of learning—that you’re able to read books and articles, identify their value, figure out how they’re relevant to the subject matter, and if you’re having a difficult time, let me know so I can help. You should be able to *express this learning in some form I can evaluate*—answers on a quiz, papers, discussion posts, etc. Discussion in ‘class’ will focus on making strong arguments supported with logic and evidence. You’re expected to show respect to everyone in the class, so don’t let ownership of ideas get in the way of healthy debate. If you have questions about what’s appropriate in class, follow the Golden Rule or ask.

### **Students with disabilities**

Any student requiring assistance or accommodation from me in performing course-related work should make his/her needs known to me in a timely manner. If you have a documented disability or suspect that you have a learning problem, you are entitled to reasonable and appropriate accommodations. But you must work with the Disabilities Services Office (Pat Arnson, Director, [parnson@eou.edu](mailto:parnson@eou.edu), or at [disabsvc@eou.edu](mailto:disabsvc@eou.edu)). The office is located in Loso Hall 234 (phone 962-3235).

### **Drop Policy**

A student may drop from a course for any reason with no record on the student’s transcript *before the end of the 4th week of the term*. Thereafter, a student must withdraw from the course. A student may withdraw *from the 5th week of the term through the 7th week* with a grade of “W” indicated on the transcript.

*No withdrawals will be issued after the 7th week of the term.* Instructors will issue a letter grade (A-F, or I) for all students enrolled after the 7th week. A student making adequate academic progress during the term and needing to withdraw after the 7th week may request an incomplete from the instructor.

### **Grades**

Unless I've made a math error, *all grades are final*. If you need the grade, simply do the work. It's unfair to do otherwise. So being a few points shy of the grade you want is something you'll want to address during the course, not after you see your grade in Mountie Hub. I follow the disabilities office when they make accommodations, of course. And if there are extenuating circumstances, please contact me via email.

Soc 315: Foundations of Social Welfare (Fall 2020)

<https://people.eou.edu/socwelf>

	Mon	Tu	Wed	Thu	Fri
Wk 0			9:00 315 intro, syllabus		
Wk1	315 office (email): 9-10		315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	
Wk2	315 office (email): 9-10		315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	315 sm grp, 9-9:50
Wk3	315 office (email): 9-10	Wks 1-2 discussion closes	315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	
Wk4	315 office (email): 9-10		315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	315 sm grp, 9-9:50
Wk5	315 office (email): 9-10 Wks 3-4 discussion closes		315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	Midterm quiz opens Saturday Oct 31
Wk6	315 office (email): 9-10	Midterm quiz closes Tuesday Nov 3	315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	
Wk7	315 office (email): 9-10 Wks 5-6 discussion closes			315 office (zoom): 11-12	315 sm grp, 9-9:50
Wk8	315 office (email): 9-10		315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	
Wk9	315 sm grp, 9-9:50	Wks 7-8 discussion closes			
Wk10	315 office (email): 9-10	Last day to submit resources project	315 zoom, 9:00	315 office (zoom): 11-12	315 sm grp, 9-9:50 Last quiz opens Sat Dec 5 Term paper due Sun Dec 6
Wk11	Wk 10 discussion closes	Last quiz closes Tu Dec 8			