NyU gallatin School of Individualized study

First-UG 782: The American Welfare State
First Year Research Seminar
Spring 2017

Jacob Remes 1 Washington Place, Room 501
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1 Washington Pl., Room 510
Office hours: TTh 3:15-4:30; W 11:00-12:30

Description
What should happen to poor people? Should they be forced to work, be objects of pity, have the right to basic necessities? What is the proper role of the government in supporting its citizens? Americans have debated these questions for generations, and indeed debates about welfare policy remain central to contemporary politics. Our answers implicate not only our treatment of poor people but broader questions of the government’s role in the lives of citizens and of American identity. In this research seminar, we will examine the history of social welfare and government benefits in the United States from the colonial period to the present. Chronologically, we will devote half the term to the second half of the 20th century, and we will learn about the development of the peculiarly American private welfare system and the welfare rights movement. We will pay special attention to the positions and subjectivities of reformers, bureaucrats, social workers, and aid recipients. In other words, we will ask how reformers, social workers, and welfare recipients have related to each other, how their relative positions in society have influenced how they have acted, and what the power relationships have been among them. We will read books by Michael Katz and Annelise Orleck. Students will write their own histories of welfare, using archival documents and secondary sources.

Learning goals
The primary purpose of this course is to teach you how to do historical research, from formulating a research question to finding primary and secondary sources to doing archival research to writing an essay based on your research. We will do that in the context of learning the history of the American welfare system. More specifically, the goals of this course are:

- Students will learn the history of the American welfare system, especially the roles of politics, power, and professionalization in that history.
- Students will develop their historical research and writing skills by exploring on topic in welfare history in depth.

Required texts
In general, books in which we will be reading at least 100 pages are listed below, are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore, and are on reserve at Bobst. Books in which we will be reading less than 100 pages will be scanned and available on NYU Classes. I very
strongly recommend that you print out the readings on NYU Classes to read them, rather than reading them on a screen. If you are concerned about spending too much on books, I encourage you to shop around online for used books (use the ISBN listed below). You can also come talk to me and I’ll help you figure out some strategies.


**Assignments and grading**

In this course, we are doing two things in parallel: learning the history of the US welfare system by reading about it and talking about those readings, and writing our own histories of the US welfare system by doing secondary and primary source research. Your assignments will do both of those things.

*Class participation and discussion – 18% of your final grade*

The purpose of class participation is not only to show that you have done the reading assigned, but also to help yourself and your classmates better understand the readings and the issues discussed in them. In addition, class participation provides practice for the skill of engaging in honest, respectful, and thoughtful intellectual discussion. The point of discussion is quality, not quantity; you don’t get points each time you open your mouth, and the person who talks once but says something brilliant that moves the discussion forward is more appreciated than the person who talks every five minutes but never says anything useful. That said, you can’t participate well if you never participate, so you can’t be silent; if I don’t know the sound of your voice by the end of the term, you’re unlikely to get a good class participation grade. Likewise, you can’t participate if you’re not in class, so please prioritize attendance.

*Reading responses – 7% of your final grade*

Each Tuesday, you will also bring to class a short (approximately 250 words, or one page) reading response. This isn’t a paper, and it won’t be graded as a paper. It’s a way to make you think about the reading before you come to class, to get your intellectual juices flowing, and to practice writing. In each reading response, you should think about the argument of what you have just read and assess its success. These papers will be graded check-plus (10/10), check (9/10), or check-minus (8/10). This means that the only way you can get less than an 8 out of the 10 possible points in this section is by failing to turn in your reading responses. Note that because the point of the reading response is to think about the readings before class, late reading responses will not be accepted; if for whatever reason you can’t turn in your reading response on paper (you aren’t in class, you have a printer emergency) please email it to me by the time class starts.
Final paper – 25% of your final grade
Your main project in this class will be to write a paper about some element—any element—of welfare history based on your original research. Throughout the term, you will do smaller graded assignments to get you there, but a quarter of your grade will be based on the final product.

Preliminary assignments are described in the course schedule below. Bring in a paper copy on the day under which they’re listed, unless otherwise specified. We’ll talk about them in class. They will count for the following amounts of your final grade:
Assignment One (research questions)– 5%
Assignment Two (secondary sources)– 5%
Assignment Three (annotated bibliography)– 6%
Assignment Four (collection description)– 6%
Assignment Five (single item description)– 6%
Assignment Six (status report)– 6%
Assignment Seven (putting together primary and secondary sources) – 6%
Assignment Eight (introduction draft and outline) – 5%
Assignment Nine (draft) – 5%

Course schedule
Each day below is listed with readings and assignments. In general, on Tuesdays we will discuss readings—be sure to have completed that day’s readings before class—and on Thursdays we will discuss your research projects.

Tues., January 24 – Introduction
• No reading

Thurs., January 26 – Introduction: The experience of welfare work, poverty, and welfare
• Tressie McMillan Cottom, “The Logic of Stupid Poor People,” on the blog Tressiemc, 29 October 2013. [Link on NYU Classes]

Tues., January 31 - Origins of the US welfare system

Thurs., February 2 – Talking about research papers
• No assignment but please bring Turabian to class

Tues., February 7 - Welfare in the 19th century
• Katz chapters 3 and 4 (pp 60-113)
Thurs., February 9 – Library tour I (Tamiment)
- We will meet Sarah Moazeni at the Tamiment Library on the 10th floor of Bobst. Please be especially sure to be there on time.
- Assignment One: Think of at least three questions you might want to research. For each one, write a paragraph explaining why you’re interested in it (what makes you want to pursue this project) and how you think you might find the (or an) answer to your question. [Bring this with you to our session at the Tamiment and I’ll collect it from you there.]

Tues., February 14 – The Progressive Era I
- Katz chapter 5 (pp 117-150)

Thurs., February 16 – Library tour II (main library)
- We will meet Marybeth McCartin at in Bobst room 619. (Directions: Take the elevators to the 6th floor; turn right and go through the East doors; go straight and, at the end of the aisle, turn right; rm. 619 will be straight ahead.)

Tues., February 21 – The Progressive Era II
- Katz chapters 6 and 7 (pp 151-212)

Thurs., February 23 – Secondary sources
- Assignment Two: Using your new library skills, spend some time with library databases and Bobcat. Identify at least five scholarly articles or books you think will be useful for your research. Create a bibliography of these in Chicago/Turabian style.

Tues., February 28 – The New Deal
- Katz chapter 8 (pp 213-255)

Thurs., March 2 – Annotated bibliography
- Assignment Three: Annotate your bibliography. Write three or four sentences for each article or book explaining its argument and its relevance to your project. You may decide to add or remove items from last week’s bibliography.

Tues., March 7 – After the New Deal
- Nelson Lichtenstein, "From Corporatism to Collective Bargaining: Organized Labor and the Eclipse of Social Democracy in the Postwar Era," in The Rise and Fall of the

Thurs., March 9 – No Class (Early Spring Break!)

Tues., March 14 – No Class (Spring Break)

Thurs., March 16 – No Class (Spring Break)

Tues., March 21 – The Great Society
  • Katz chapter 9 (pp 259-282)
  • Annelise Orleck, Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), chapters 1, 2, and 3 (pp 1-97). Skim chapters 1-2; focus on chapter 3.

Thurs., March 23 – Finding an archive
  • Assignment Four: By this point, you will have found an archival collection. You will write a three-page description of your collection. Answer the following questions:
    o What is it like physically? Where is it? How big is it? What kind of items does it contain?
    o What is its provenance? Who created the documents? Who collected them? Why are they in the institution they’re in?
    o What type of question will it help you to answer? How are you imagining using this collection for your paper? How do the specifics of the collection force you to change the topic you thought you were writing about?

Tues., March 28 – The Welfare Rights Movement
  • Orleck chapters 4, 5, and 6 (pp 98-207)

Thurs., March 30 – Describe a single document
  • Assignment Five: Pick a single primary source from your archival collection. Describe it in detail in two or three pages. Begin by citing it as you would in a footnote, using Chicago/Turabian style. Then describe it physically: what does it look like? What is the paper like? Is it typed or handwritten? How long is it? When was it created? What documents surround it in the archive? Then talk about who wrote it and why. Is it a letter? A memo? A report? A memorandum of conversation? To and from whom? Who was the intended audience, and why was it written? Finally, what do you learn from it? How will you use this document in your final paper? Is what you learn from it different from what its creator intended its audience to learn? Why or why not?

Tues., April 4 – After the Great Society: Nixon
  • Katz chapter 10 (pp 283-299)
  • Orleck chapter 7 (pp 208-244)
**Thurs., April 6 – Archival research**
- **Assignment Six:** Write a one-to-two-page status report of your archival research. How's it going? What are you finding so far?

**Tues., April 11 – The North Carolina Fund**
- Watch Rebecca Cerese, “Change Comes Knocking: The Story of the North Carolina Fund” (FilmRise Features, 2008) [Link on NYU Classes]

**Thurs., April 13 – Putting together primary and secondary research**
- **Assignment Seven:** Write a three-to-five page paper putting your primary source research into the context of your secondary sources. This paper should include at least the following:
  - Return to your secondary sources. What questions did they prime you to ask of your primary sources? How did they shape the way you went into the archives?
  - What in your archives research did you find that you understood better because of the secondary source research you’d done (including the reading we’re doing for class)?
  - What in your archives research did you find that made you question something that you’d read in your secondary source research?

**Tues., April 18 – The War on Welfare: Reagan and Clinton**
- Orleck chapters 8 and 9 (pp 245-310)
- Katz chapter 11 (pp 300-334)

**Thurs., April 20 – Introduction and outline**
- **Assignment Eight:** Draft an introductory paragraph and an outline for your final paper. Send this paragraph and your outline to your workshopping group by Tuesday night (at a time mutually agreeable to all of you) so that your groupmates can give you feedback. We will split into groups and discuss your outlines during class.

**Tues., April 25 – After Clinton**

**Thurs., April 27 – Draft**
- **Assignment Nine:** Send a draft of your paper to your workshopping group by Tuesday night (at a time mutually agreeable to all of you) so that your groupmates can give you feedback. We will split into groups and discuss your drafts in class.

**Tues., May 2 – Where We Are Today**
- Paul Kivel, "Social Service or Social Change?" in *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2007), 129-149. [NYU Classes]
Course policies
Attendance. As described elsewhere in this syllabus, participation in class discussion is a key thing we do in this class. You can't participate if you're not in class. Therefore, attendance is required. Absences will be factored into your participation grade. It is always better to come than not to come, if you can. If an absence is unavoidable, please email me ahead of time; depending on the circumstances, I will excuse your absence.

Electronic devices. Electronic devices can sometimes help and sometimes hinder active participation. They can be resources for looking things up; they might have your text on them; and they can be essential to students with disabilities. But they can also be distracting to you and to your classmates (and your professor!). Texting, IMing, or otherwise playing on your devices shows a lack of respect for the others in the room. (So too, for that matter, do things that do not require electronics, like reading the newspaper or sitting at the table reading a novel.) While you are welcome to have your computer or other device for class related work while in class, please refrain from checking your email, IMing, texting, playing games, tweeting, or otherwise using your screens for non-class purposes. The general rule is, Don't be rude.

Academic integrity. As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the university. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (http://gallatin.nyu.edu/about/bulletin/undergrad/policies/integrity.html).

Beyond the above boilerplate warning, the best rule is: When in doubt, cite. This is always true, and it is especially true in this class about research. That's because citing isn't just about following the rules. To be convincing, arguments must be based in fact, and in order to assess facts the reader must know from whence they came. Academic dishonesty also robs you of the education you're here for; if you don't do the work you're supposed to do, you don't get the educational experiences you're supposed to get. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, ask.

Deadlines and extensions. Written work must be turned in on time. Reading responses will not be accepted late under any circumstances; all other work that is turned in late will be marked down a third of a grade per day; that is, a paper turned in a day late that would otherwise have gotten an A- will get a B+. If a legitimate delay is unavoidable, you can ask for an extension, but you must ask for one no less than 24 hours before the deadline.
Office hours and help. I encourage you to come to my office and chat about welfare history, the class, or about anything else. No appointment is necessary during office hours. If you want to meet outside my office hours, feel free to email me for an appointment and we'll make something work. You're also welcome to email me about anything else at jacob.remes@nyu.edu (but please don't expect a fast response on weekends). Always, the rule is, if you don't understand something, or if you're having trouble, ask for help, whether in class, by email, or in office hours.

Academic assistance. This is a first-year course, so everybody in this class is reading, writing, thinking, and researching at the college level for the first or second time. It’s hard! If it weren’t you wouldn't need to take this special first year research course. Teaching people how to research and write is my job, so don’t be shy about asking for help. But I'm not the only one to whom you can turn. I strongly encourage you to make use of the Gallatin Writing Center at every stage of your writing, from conceiving of your paper to your final revisions. See http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/undergraduate/writing/writingcenterappointments.html for more details, or email Sam Patwell at smp725@nyu.edu. The general rule, whether for reading or writing or researching, is, If you're having trouble, ask for help. That's what I'm here for. If for whatever reason you don't want to talk to me, reach out to your academic advisor or to Yevgenia Traps, your first-year class advisor. The most important things are to not suffer in silence and to make use of the many NYU and Gallatin resources that exist to help you.

Disabilities. New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. It is the University's policy that no qualified student with a disability be excluded from participating in any University program or activity, denied the benefits of any University program or activity, or otherwise subjected to discrimination with regard to any University program or activity. If you have a disability and need accommodation, the first step is to talk to the Moses Center for Students for Disabilities. You can contact them at 212-998- 4980 or email mosescsd@nyu.edu; see http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/students-with-disabilities.html for more information. Before or after you speak with the Moses Center, I am happy to talk to you about accommodating you.