BOSTON COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

EC2242   Matthew S. Rutledge
Spring 2018   Office Hours (Hovey House 201):
Tue & Thu 9:00-10:15am   Tue 8:00-9:00am
O'Neill 257   Wed 4:30-5:30pm
                                                            and by appointment

PUBLIC POLICY IN AN AGING SOCIETY
Updated 10/17/2017

We live in an aging nation and an aging world. The percent of the U.S. population aged 65 and over, about 13% today, will increase to nearly 20% by 2030, and remain there for several decades. Between now and 2050, while the overall U.S. population is projected to increase by 42%, the percentage 65+ will increase by 120%, the percentage 85+ by 230% and the percentage of those aged 100+ will increase eleven-fold.

In this course, we will discuss current policy issues related to these demographic trends, with special emphasis on our social insurance programs for older Americans: Is Social Security really going broke? Should Social Security be fundamentally reformed, and how? Are current trends in Medicare and Medicaid spending sustainable? We will analyze recent retirement trends in the United States, examine the challenges for older workers who find themselves unemployed, discuss the economic well-being of the elderly, and conclude with the economic and political challenges we face as an aging nation.

The only course prerequisite is Principles of Microeconomics. If you have not had this course at Boston College or elsewhere, please let me know.

There is no textbook for this course; instead, we will read articles from policy journals and the popular press, on a reading list that I will continuously update on the Canvas site. You should read the assigned articles BEFORE class; in fact, I will ask you to **submit 2-3 bullet points to the Canvas "Assignments" tab by 8:00 AM before each class** on the things that you found most interesting, surprising, or confusing in the articles assigned for that topic. I will also ask you to keep a rating spreadsheet on the articles assigned, which I will provide, ranking each reading from a low of 1 (how could you possibly have assigned this reading?) through 3 (a good reading) to a maximum of 5 (excellent reading; be sure to assign this when you teach this course again). This will help improve the course in the future.

Approximate weights for your final grade will be:

Midterm (Tue 3/27)	20 points
Final exam (TBD)	30 points
Final draft of Paper (4/24)	40 points
Class participation	10 points

This course will have a midterm (March 27 during class) and a final (TBD, during the assigned final exam time). Put these dates in your calendars now; there will be no make-up exams.

You will have the opportunity to write (and re-write twice!) a 10 - 12 page paper on a topic of your choice. We are once again

National Academy of Social Insurance: http://www.nasi.org/
NBER Retirement Research Center: http://www.nber.org/programs/ag/rrc/rrchome.html
The Upshot (from New York Times): http://www.nytimes.com/upshot/
Urban Institute: http://www.urban.org/
Vox: http://www.vox.com/

Newspapers, magazines, National Public Radio, policy wonks' Twitter accounts – heck, even
The Daily Show and John Oliver – are full of interesting articles on aging issues, and are good
sources of paper topics. Plee5i1.15 TD   [(N)-2(e5d)3(c)4(e)[(s)-1(our)3(c)4wb[d asuourour. evee [(Ca)4(n 0 Tw

SYLLABUS

Jan 16	Introduction and Research Methods
Jan 18	Demography of Aging I
Jan 23	Demography of Aging II
Jan 30	Demographics of the Retirement Crisis

Feb 1