Winter 2027
SOCI 4860 B
Neoliberalism and the Welfare State
Tuesdays, 8:30-11:25

What is this course about?

What happens when governments prioritize markets, individual responsibility, and economic competitiveness? What happens to social programs, inequality, and our ideas of citizenship?

SOCI 4860 B: Neoliberalism and the Welfare State explores the transformation of welfare states in the era of neoliberalism. We examine how economic and political ideas have reshaped social policy, work, inequality, public services, and everyday life.

This course connects **big sociological ideas to issues that affect us every day -** from housing and healthcare to precarious work, poverty, education, and social security.

Questions we'll explore

What is neoliberalism, and where did it come from?

How has neoliberalism transformed the welfare state?

Who benefits - and who bears the costs - of market-oriented policies?

Has the welfare state been dismantled, transformed, or reinvented?

What happens to inequality under neoliberalism?

How have welfare reforms changed work and employment?

What does "individual responsibility" mean in a neoliberal society?

How do privatization and austerity affect public services?

What can housing, healthcare, education, and social assistance tell us about the changing welfare state?

How have different groups experienced neoliberalism differently?

Is another model of social welfare possible?

What might the future of the welfare state look like?

Why take this course?

Because these debates are not just theoretical - they are about the world we live in.

You'll develop tools to critically analyze contemporary social and political issues, question taken-for-granted assumptions, and connect sociological theory to real-world debates about inequality, markets, government, and social justice.

Come prepared to question the status quo. :)