

The Policy in the Room

POSC 459 — Social Welfare Politics and Policy

Week 2 · Wednesday, September 2

Howard ch. 2, "Tracks of My Tiers" · Desmond ch. 2

Today

1. **Research pre-survey** (~10 min)
2. **PapyrusAI sign-up**, everyone, in the room (~10 min)
3. **My AI policy — as a policy** (~35 min)
4. Why haven't we made more progress? (the rest)

First: the pre-survey

uci.questionpro.com/t/Acs2vZ9boH

- It is **part of a research study**, and it is **voluntary**.
- No credit either way. Declining costs you nothing with me.
- Absent today, or want to do it later? Complete it on your own **by Friday 9/11**.

Sign-up, together, now

1. Canvas course nav → **PapyrusAI**. First access **creates your account**.
2. Choose Google or a password — decide now, not in October.
3. Course code: **FALL2026-POSC459**
4. Confirm you're enrolled before you close the tab.

One entry, one new conversation.

The + button. Top right. Every time.

You are carrying five AI policies right now

Five courses. Five different rules. Zero tolerance for mixing them up.

That is **administrative burden**, and I am contributing to it.

By Week 3 you'll have the vocabulary for exactly this.

§12, in your hands

Read my AI policy the way this course reads any policy:

- Where is it **unclear**?
- Where does it impose **burden it doesn't justify**?
- Where would a **reasonable student get it wrong**?

My stake, on the record

- I use these tools.
- I'm in a grant-funded faculty learning community promoting AI-integrated teaching.
- This course runs on PapyrusAI.

Asking you to evaluate something I benefit from without saying so would be the exact failure the disclosure rule exists to prevent.

Scale it up

The CSU–OpenAI contract.

- 2025: systemwide ChatGPT Edu deal, ~\$17M for eighteen months.
- Renewed 2026: **~\$13M a year, for three years.**
- Sold as *equitable access*. Contested in public — EdSource, LAist, the AAUP.

You have an account because of this decision.

The exercise — three groups, eight minutes

1. Does "**equitable access**" describe what the contract accomplishes? What would have to be true for the claim to hold?
2. **Who bears the cost** — and is it the group that gets the benefit?
3. The beneficiaries **were not consulted**. Compare: how are TANF or SNAP beneficiaries consulted — or not?

Report **a position** and the strongest argument against it. A group that summarizes both sides goes back for one minute.

Before we leave it — a poll

Does receiving something make you more likely to defend the decision that provided it?

Monday I left you a question

If poverty is a knot and not a line — what number would tell us we're making progress?

Here is the official number.

The flatline

- Official poverty rate, 1970: **12.6%**
- Official poverty rate, 2019: **10.5%**

Fifty years. And over that stretch, spending on the thirteen largest means-tested programs went from **\$1,015 to \$3,419 per person** — up 237%.

Desmond's chapter 2 walks the suspect list: stinginess, immigration, single parenthood. Each one fails the evidence.

But which number was that?

The official measure **never sees** SNAP, the EITC, housing help, or a stimulus check. Count those — the Supplemental Poverty Measure does — and poverty **falls meaningfully** over the same years.

Fantasy, in the film: *"I have received extra food stamps cause of COVID. That stimulus, that paid half my bills."*

The official measure records her as untouched.

Where the dollars leak

- **22 cents** of every budgeted TANF dollar reached families as cash in 2020. About \$6B sat unspent.
- Becky, in the film — approved for pandemic unemployment: *"Everything is still pending, though, so I haven't gotten anything yet."*
- Crystal — *"I am still required to work my hours for my assistance ... maybe my assistance could get shut down."*

And Howard's map: Crystal's household runs on food stamps, HUD, disability-linked cash, and free school lunch **at once** — four programs, both "tiers," one trailer.

Due and next

- **Discussion Prompt 1 — the CSU AI contract:** due **Tuesday 9/8.**
- **Pre-survey**, if you missed it today: by **Friday 9/11.**
- **Discussion Paper 1** (both parts of *Growing Up Poor in America* + Howard ch. 3 + Pierson): **Friday 9/18.**
Keep film notes now — a person, a scene, a moment.
- **Labor Day Monday 9/7 — no class.** Week 3 is **Wednesday 9/9 only:** Howard ch. 1, Desmond chs. 3–4.