Class #2: The Crisis in Human Services

Discussion Questions for Class on September 3

Readings: Hunter and Milofsky, Prologue and Ch. 1: "Malaise"

Because writing assignments are meant to prepare you for class discussion, you must post a draft question on the Moodle Forum for this date if you want your submission to count. After posting a draft, you must revise and submit your question by midnight, September 8 if you want your response to count for a grade. Include your name that the full question # on both your Moodle posting and your final paper submission.

When you approach this reading, like many of our readings appreciate that you should look for and understand three aspects of the text. In responding to discussion questions, show full understanding of these aspect while relating them to the specific content of the question. The three aspects are the following:

a) Most readings discuss public issues, often a specific one. For these question the public issues have to do with the sense of malaise that pervades many human service institutions.

b) Most readings have a theoretical dimension, where sociological theories are presented and then used to understand the issue at hand.

c) Policy issues and theoretical dimensions relate to larger issues of the course, in this case the overall sense of whether or not our society is or should be concerned with having a government that supports providing for the basic needs of the population.

Try to write responses so that all three components are parts of your answer.

Discussion Questions

2-1 Discuss the notion that malaise affects human services by selecting one type of service like health care, education, or environmental protection.

You might think about how the Obama administration has zeroed in on specific failures in the provision of human services. Tell what you or others think is wrong. Is the failure a matter of inattention, misdirection, or bad policy? Tell how our approach to action might differ with these three sources of failure in human service programs.

2-2. Our chapter suggests that one reason social scientists have avoided advancing moral positions about social questions is that we support the argument that there are very few absolute, universal values. Is this true?

2-3. Based on your reading in the Prologue and Chapter One, what is pragmatic liberalism?

2-4. What does "failure of civility" mean?