Discussion Cases for Pragmatism and Social/Political Values

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If George Herbert Mead and John Dewey are correct in holding that freedom and individuality can be developed or thwarted through various identities/roles taken within a social group or groups, how would you evaluate the following social groups and our individual membership in politically established groups through either the state governments or the federal government:

1. Kindergarten through high school free public education supported by property taxes and state income taxes? How positive or negative in its overall effects?
2. Age 2 to 21 free public education for handicapped children supported by property taxes and state income taxes? How positive or negative in its overall effects?
3. Pell Grants of up to $5770 per year from the federal government from federal income taxes to support a citizen or green card holder to attend any public or private community college? How positive or negative in its overall effects?
4. State Grants in Virginia of approximately $5,000 a year for students to attend JMU from state taxes whose parents under FAFSA has an EFC (Expected Family Contribution) of $00.00? How positive or negative in its overall effects?
5. Land Grant Universities established by state such as Virginia Tech from free federal gifts of land or money in all 50 states from Federal taxes or land wealth? How positive or negative in its overall effects?
6. State colleges and universities established by state taxes and still funded by state income taxes so that a university like JMU can exist and provide lower cost, high quality educations less expensive that private universities could do so? How positive or negative in its overall effects?

1. Old Age, Survivor, and Disability Insurance which is more commonly referred to as Social Security which taxes both the individual worker and one’s employer. The OASDI tax rate for wages paid in 2015 is set by statute at **6.2 percent** for employees and employers, each. Thus, an individual with wages equal to or larger than $118,500 would contribute $7,347.00 to the OASDI program in 2015, and his or her employer would contribute the same amount. **In 2014, over 59 million Americans will receive almost $863 billion in Social Security benefits.**

| **December 2013 Beneficiary Data** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Retired workers** | 38 million | $49 billion | $1,294 average monthly benefit |
| **dependents** | 2.9 million | $ 1.9 billion |  |
| **Disabled workers** | 8.8 million | $10.3 billion | $1,146 average monthly benefit |
| **dependents** | 2 million | $ .69 billion |  |
| **Survivors** | 6.2 million | $ 6.7 billion | $1,244 average monthly benefit |

**Social Security is the major source of income for most of the elderly.**

* Nine out of ten individuals age 65 and older receive Social Security benefits.
* Social Security benefits represent about 38% of the income of the elderly.
* Among elderly Social Security beneficiaries, 52% of married couples and 74% of unmarried persons receive 50% or more of their income from Social Security.
* Among elderly Social Security beneficiaries, 22% of married couples and about 47% of unmarried persons rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.

. How positive or negative in its overall effects?

## Medicaid Benefits granted through federal and state tax dollars. Total Monthly Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment

[View Table in New Window](http://kff.org/health-reform/state-indicator/total-monthly-medicaid-and-chip-enrollment/)

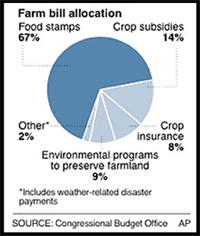
| **Location** | **Pre-ACA Average Monthly Enrollment** | **Total Monthly Medicaid/CHIP Enrollment** | **Percent Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **United States** | **57,807,872** | **69,975,289** | **19%** |
| Alabama | 799,176 | 873,954 | 9% |
| Alaska | 122,334 | 121,867 | 0% |
| Arizona | 1,201,770 | 1,482,316 | 23% |
| Arkansas | 556,851 | 824,529 | 48% |
| California | 9,157,000 | 12,170,138 | 33% |
| Colorado | 783,420 | 1,195,042 | 53% |
| Connecticut | N/A | 733,590 | N/A |
| Delaware | 223,324 | 235,775 | 6% |
| District of Columbia | 235,786 | 256,383 | 9% |
| Florida | 3,104,996 | 3,404,156 | 10% |
| Georgia | 1,535,090 | 1,724,033 | 12% |
| Hawaii | 288,357 | 314,503 | 9% |
| Idaho | 251,926 | 288,402 | 14% |
| Illinois | 2,626,943 | 3,101,946 | 18% |
| Indiana | 1,120,674 | 1,198,066 | 7% |
| Iowa | 493,515 | 512,533 | 4% |
| Kansas | 378,160 | 404,608 | 7% |
| Kentucky | 606,805 | 1,099,327 | 81% |
| Louisiana | 1,019,787 | 1,053,090 | 3% |
| Maine | N/A | 282,359 | N/A |
| Maryland | 856,297 | 1,152,248 | 35% |
| Massachusetts | 1,296,359 | 1,619,824 | 25% |
| Michigan | 1,912,009 | 2,233,070 | 17% |
| Minnesota | 873,040 | 1,037,554 | 19% |
| Mississippi | 637,229 | 711,782 | 12% |
| Missouri | 846,084 | 863,651 | 2% |
| Montana | 148,974 | 165,604 | 11% |
| Nebraska | 244,600 | 235,523 | -4% |
| Nevada | 332,560 | 541,334 | 63% |
| New Hampshire | 127,082 | 169,747 | 34% |
| New Jersey | 1,283,851 | 1,667,815 | 30% |
| New Mexico | 457,678 | 687,829 | 50% |
| New York | 5,678,417 | 6,247,440 | 10% |
| North Carolina | 1,595,952 | 1,835,638 | 15% |
| North Dakota | 69,980 | 86,220 | 23% |
| Ohio | 2,341,481 | 2,928,588 | 25% |
| Oklahoma | 790,051 | 808,807 | 2% |
| Oregon | 626,356 | 1,036,190 | 65% |
| Pennsylvania | 2,386,046 | 2,493,851 | 5% |
| Rhode Island | 190,833 | 267,466 | 40% |
| South Carolina | 889,744 | 983,275 | 11% |
| South Dakota | 115,501 | 117,687 | 2% |
| Tennessee | 1,244,516 | 1,433,932 | 15% |
| Texas | 4,441,605 | 4,651,139 | 5% |
| Utah | 294,029 | 293,359 | 0% |
| Vermont | 161,081 | 179,514 | 11% |
| Virginia | 935,434 | 968,216 | 4% |
| Washington | 1,117,576 | 1,645,727 | 47% |
| West Virginia | 354,544 | 524,569 | 48% |
| Wisconsin | 985,531 | 1,042,496 | 6% |
| Wyoming | 67,518 | 68,577 | 2% |
|  |  |  |  |

How positive or negative in its overall effects?

1. Benefits for Farmers and Others (Food Stamps) through the Farm Support Law

## How much does the Farm Bill cost?

The 2014 Farm Bill provided $489 billion in mandatory spending over the next five years (this figure does not include discretionary spending measures that are approved separately). Nutrition programs account for 80% of spending, followed by crop insurance (8%), conservation (6%), and commodity programs (5%). The remaining one percent included trade subsidies, rural development, research, forestry, energy, livestock, and horticulture/organic agriculture.



According to the Congressional Research Service, the 2014 Farm Bill restructures support for traditional commodity crops—grains, oilseeds, and cotton—by eliminating direct payments. Currently, most support for farmers comes from crop insurance programs in which farmers only receive payments when prices or revenues decrease. Conservation programs were also culled and streamlined in the 2014 Farm Bill. Meanwhile, the funding for federal food assistance programs rose from 67% in the 2008 Farm Bill to 80% today.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program spending as a share of GDP is expected to decline by 9% in 2014. This decrease in spending is largely due to the expiration of temporary benefit increases put in place by the Recovery Act of 2009 during the economic recession. Not only have these temporary benefits expired, but the total number of SNAP recipients has decreased as well. Caseloads skyrocketed during the worst years of the recession, but leveled off in 2011 and began to fall in the first half of 2014. The result will be a reversal of the upward trend SNAP spending has taken in recent years, from $34.6 billion in 2008 to $80 billion in 2012.

How positive or negative in its overall effects?

1. Helping people buy their homes through tax deductions for mortgage interest paid every year on their houses. In 2012, 34 million households, or 22 percent of tax filers, claimed the home mortgage deduction. That cost the federal government $68 billion in forgone revenue, according to estimates from the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation.

The deduction is available only to the one-third of taxpayers who itemize their deductions and tend to have higher incomes. More than three-quarters of the benefit in 2012 went to households with annual incomes exceeding $100,000. upward trend SNAP spending has taken in recent years, from $34.6 billion in 2008 to $80 billion in 2012.

How positive or negative in its overall effects?

1. Affordable Care Act: Obama Care’s cost is currently estimated at a net cost of [$1.207 trillion](https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/49973-Updated_Budget_Projections.pdf) dollars by 2025 (all the years from now till 2025). This includes the cost of ObamaCare’s major insurance related provisions, but doesn’t take into account all of the [cost curbing measures](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-control-costs/) in the law.

* As of March 2015, the net cost of ObamaCare is projected at [$1.207 trillion](https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/49973-Updated_Budget_Projections.pdf) over the 2016 – 2025 period.
* This is down from [$1.35](http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/49892-breakout-AppendixB.pdf) trillion in January 2015, which itself represented a 7% reduction from [April 2014](http://cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/45231-ACA_Estimates.pdf).
* The net cost includes coverage provisions like: [Marketplace subsidies](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-subsidies/), the [expansion of Medicaid and CHIP](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacares-medicaid-expansion/), and [Employer tax credits](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-small-business/).
* The net cost also includes revenue provisions like: [Penalty payments](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-individual-mandate/), the [excise tax](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-cadillac-tax-excise-tax-on-high-end-plans/), and other [taxes](http://obamacarefacts.com/obamacare-taxes/).
* The net cost doesn’t include [other reforms](http://obamacarefacts.com/summary-of-provisions-patient-protection-and-affordable-care-act/) which continue to contribute to a downward trend in healthcare costs, including many Medicare related reforms. Medicare spending is calculated separately in the [budget projections](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/49973), but Medicare reform comprises a bulk of [the Affordable Care Act itself](http://obamacarefacts.com/summary-of-provisions-patient-protection-and-affordable-care-act/).
* In 2015, due in part to the ACA, health care spending grew [at the slowest rate on record (since 1960)](http://obamacarefacts.com/2015/02/05/obamacare-10-million-strong-growing/).  Meanwhile, health care price inflation is at its lowest rate in 50 years.
* Due to the insurance related provisions, **6 in 10 Americans can get covered for**[**$100 or less**](http://obamacarefacts.com/2015/02/05/obamacare-10-million-strong-growing/)**on the**[**Health Insurance Marketplace**](http://obamacarefacts.com/insurance-exchange/health-insurance-marketplace/), with the average plan costing just [$82](http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/2014/Premiums/2014MktPlacePremBrf.pdf) after [Premium Tax Credits](http://obamacarefacts.com/insurance-exchange/premium-tax-credits/) in 2014.
* How positive or negative in its overall effects?