

Faculty Spotlight: Stephen Pimpare, Public Policy

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Since joining the [UNH Manchester](#) faculty in 2015, Dr. Stephen Pimpare has inspired students with his passion and expertise on American politics and public policy. Pimpare was integral in the creation of the [Public Service and Nonprofit Leadership program](#), which prepares students with real-world experience and service learning in government, law, nonprofit organizations and more. In addition to teaching, Pimpare is the director of the college's [Center for Community Engagement and Experiential Learning](#) and a fellow at UNH's [Carsey School of Public Policy](#).

Prior to joining UNH, Pimpare served as a senior-level administrator for anti-hunger organizations in New York City and taught at the City University of New York, New York University and Columbia University.

Outside of the traditional classroom, Pimpare has also designed and taught online courses and seminars on poverty in the U.S. for the AmeriCorps VISTA program and the Silver School of Social Work at NYU. Pimpare is also host of the New Books Network's Public Policy Channel and a consulting editor for the journal *Social Work*.

His second book, *A People's History of Poverty in America*, received the Michael Harrington Award from the American Political Science Association "for demonstrating how scholarship can be used in the struggle for a better world." His latest book, *Politics for Social Workers* is a hands-on manual to contemporary American politics, showing social workers and social work students how to engage in effective activism. He also wrote a book about the history of poverty and homelessness in the movies titled *Ghettos, Tramps, and Welfare Queens: Down & Out on the Silver Screen*.

Pimpare earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from the City University of New York and a B.S. in Community & Human Services from the State University of New York.

What do you like best about your job?

It's the boring answer, but it's the honest one – our students are amazing. In part because so many have so many responsibilities beyond their school work, there's a seriousness of purpose that I really appreciate.

What is your favorite UNH Manchester memory?

I interviewed on campus before the current building's renovation was complete and got to see even more of the bones of this old mill. One of the first papers I wrote as a grad student was a labor history of Lowell, and Manchester shares a lot of that history. It continues to feel special to work in a place that still has echoes of that past.

Tell us your favorite:

- **Manchester restaurant:** Well, it not a restaurant and it's not in Manchester, but check out Benedikt Dairy in Goffstown for unbelievable organic milk, yogurt, and ice cream, and for an astonishing array of produce when in season. You should say "hi" to the cows when you are there.
- **New Hampshire destination:** There's a particular old stone bridge, with a small waterfall and creek below it, out in Hillsboro that is equally magical in summer or when it's frozen over in winter. It's not far from some pretty good hiking trails, too.
- **Book:** I find myself returning most to Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* books and to Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. Surely that says something about my tastes in fiction, but I'm not sure what. For books in my field, there is still nothing that matches Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward's *Regulating the Poor*, both for the clarity of its thought and its prose, and for lasting insight into the deeper structures of American political development.
- **Movie:** I still find Hitchcock's *Notorious* mesmerizing (and it has to be among Ingrid Bergman's best performances), and I can still be utterly charmed, for some reason, by Kathleen Turner and Dennis Quaid (and Stanley Tucci and Fiona Shaw!) in the very silly *Undercover Blues*.

- **Childhood book:** Does *Lord of the Rings* count as a children's book? I must have read it four or five times as a pre-teen. In my younger days, I believe I read all of the Hardy Boys mysteries and have a vague memory of gently harassing a local librarian, not quite believing her when she told me that there were no more and that I'd read them all.
- **Childhood TV show:** Well, *Sesame Street*, obviously. I felt a certain kinship with Oscar. I like to think I've mellowed with age and am a bit more like Kermit now.

What are your hobbies?

Any spare time is typically spent reading or writing, but I do love to cook.

Best vacation ever?

An extended camping trip through most of the national parks in Southern Utah. I think it may be the most beautiful place in the country.

We'd be surprised to know that...

Well, the things that would really surprise you I won't reveal. But you might be a little surprised to learn that I trained to be an actor at the Juilliard School.

Which 3 famous people, living or dead, would you want at your fantasy dinner party?

If we're going to talk social policy, then Jane Addams (a founder of the US Settlement House movement), Frances Perkins (Labor Secretary under FDR and an architect of Social Security), and Johnnie Tillmon (director of the National Welfare Rights Organization).

As a child, what did you wish to become when you grew up?

I had an extended fireman phase (which is what much of my mother's side of the family did and still does). And I still suspect that if someone offered me the chance to drop everything and start training to be an astronaut, I would do it. Although I think twice about this when I am reminded that there are no hot showers in space.

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