

COURSE OBJECTIVES (What You Can Expect to Learn in This Class)

- To gain knowledge about the political causes & consequences of U.S. poverty
- To think critically and write clearly about complex social and political problems
- To have intellectually rigorous conversation about contentious political issues

REQUIRED TEXTS

Required Texts are available at the Cornell Store and through the Library Course Reserves.

- Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Schiller, Bradley R. 2008. *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Lin, Ann Chih and David R. Harris (eds). 2008. *The Colors of Poverty: Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

Attending lecture is mandatory. Attendance will be taken and each absence will impact your participation grade. I will periodically give pop quizzes at the beginning of lecture. Anyone who is late or absent will receive zero points for that day's quiz (receiving a zero on more than one quiz results in getting no points for the quiz portion of the course grade). **There will be no exceptions.** The success of the class will hinge on insights offered by the students. You should carefully read all assigned material and come to class ready to talk about it. I expect widespread engagement from the students.

Assignments

You will be required to complete several writing assignments by the end of the semester. The assignments will start out simple and grow more complex.

The deadlines for assignments are detailed in the **COURSE SCHEDULE** below. ***Please read the schedule carefully and repeatedly in order to stay on top of the assignment due dates.*** Even if an assignment is not verbally mentioned in class, you must still follow the schedule as presented below (unless otherwise noted by the instructor). All assignments must be submitted via blackboard on the assigned date by 11:59pm.

All writing assignments must follow these guidelines:

- Word process all work
- Use Times New Roman 12 point font
- Double space with 1-inch margins
- Number all pages
- Follow ALL instructions on assignment prompts
- At the top of the first page indicate your name, the date, and a title (if applicable).
- Appropriately cite any sources using the Chicago Style Citation method (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

GRADING/COURSE ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be determined based on the following distribution:

Participation.....	25%
Assignment #1 (Reflection).....	5%
Assignment #2 (Blog piece).....	10%
Assignment#3 (Policy Memo).....	15%
Assignment#4 (Wiki Revision).....	10%
Quizzes.....	5%
Final Exam.....	30%

Detailed assignment prompts will be posted on Blackboard well in advance of due dates.

COURSE POLICIES AND DETAILS

Communication: For simple administrative or clerical matters students should feel free to contact me or the TA via e-mail. You can generally expect a reply within 24 hours (and only during regular working hours). For more important matters, please speak to me in person. Office hours will be on Tuesdays from 2pm to 3:30 and students should sign up online.

Blackboard: All course documents will be made available via blackboard (blackboard.cornell.edu). Please familiarize yourself with the blackboard site and its various capabilities (bbhelp.cit.cornell.edu). Important messages and updates will be posted to blackboard. Students should enable their accounts such that blackboard announcements are sent directly to their e-mail.

Electronic devices: *Smart phones cannot be used in class for any reason.* You are free to use your laptop for note taking purposes. However, if I suspect that you are texting, checking e-mail or browsing the Internet, I will ask you to turn off your electronic device and you will lose the privilege of having it in any future class meetings.

Late Assignments: The COURSE SCHEDULE contains information on the due date for each assignment. Please note the deadlines in advance so that you can plan to complete them on time. Late work will not be excused unless unavoidable circumstances arise (e.g. documented sickness, a family emergency). Having multiple assignments due in the same day or the same week is not a permissible justification for tardiness. Late papers will be downgraded per day of tardiness.

Appealing Grades: If you feel an assigned grade does not reflect your performance you can submit a one-page appeal (in writing) no more than one week after the grade has been issued.

Plagiarism and Ethics: Students should review Cornell's policy towards plagiarism (plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu). Your work must be yours and yours alone. All suspected cases of plagiarism are sent to the appropriate university officials for further review. If you are not sure whether something counts as plagiarism, ask me.

Accessibility Needs: I am committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students. If you have a documented disability or any condition that affects your ability to participate in this class and you will need any assistance, you must request accommodation(s) from as early as possible (no later than the third day of the term). Additional information about the policies and procedures for accommodation of disabilities is available on the web: <http://sds.cornell.edu>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please Note: Starred* items are in the library course reserves. Everything else is either from the required course texts or available via the Blackboard website.

Week 1: Assessing the National Conversation on Poverty in America

Tuesday, August 25th

- First class, no readings.

Thursday, August 27th

- Henneberger, "Poverty is Finally Having Its Day"
- J.P.P., "Another Two Cents"
- Weeks, "Poverty Versus Democracy In America"
- Bello, "4 Tough Questions on Poverty for Republican Presidential Candidates"
- Almendrala, "How Poverty Stunts Kids Brain Development"
- McCoy, "Freddie Gray's Life a Study on the Effects of Lead Paint on Poor Blacks."
- Kristoff, "It's Not Just About Bad Choices"
- Wilcox, "If You Really Care About Ending Poverty in America..."

Week 2: A Profile of Contemporary U.S. Poverty)

Tuesday, September 1st

- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 3 (“Counting the Poor”)
- PEW Research Center, “Who is Poor in America?”
- Pimpare, “Sooner or Later Most of Us Will Be Poor and On Welfare”
- Santhanam and Hickey, “More children are in poverty today than before”
- Heritage Foundation, “What is Poverty in the United States Today?”
- Center for American Progress, “What You Need When You’re Poor”

Thursday, September 3rd

NO CLASS

Week 3: Poverty & the Welfare State in Historical Perspective

Tuesday September 8th

- **Assignment# 1 Due**
- Trattner, “Colonial America” (Chapter 2)*
- Patterson, “The Gospel of Prevention, Progressive Style” (Chapter 2)
- Patterson, “The Early Welfare State” (Chapter 4)

Thursday September 10th

- Trattner, “From World War to Great Society” (Chapter 14)
- Trattner, “War on the Welfare State” (Chapter 16)
- Pimpare, “Respect: The Price of Relief” (Chapter 6)*

Week 4: Sources of Poverty: Economic Barriers

Tuesday September 15th

- *Poverty and Power*, Chapter 5 (“The Economic System and Poverty”)
- Mead, “Low Wages & Hard Times”*
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 6 (“The Working Poor”)

Thursday September 17th

- *Poverty and Power*, Chapter 10 (“Structural Obstacles and the Persistence of Poverty”)
- Mead, “Barriers to Employment”*
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 5 (“Labor Force Participation”)

Week 5: Sources of Poverty: Economic Incentives & Conditions

Tuesday, September 22nd

- Murray, "Incentives to Fail: Maximizing Short-Term Gain"*
- Murray, "The Constraints on Helping"*
- McLanahan et al. "Losing Ground: A Critique" (*Focus*)
- Jencks, "How Poor Are The Poor?"

Thursday September 24th

- Blank, "A Changing Economy"
- Bartels, "The Eroding Minimum Wage"
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Appendix 1 ("Does Prosperity Trickle Down?")

Week 6: Sources of Poverty: "Cultural" Causes

Tuesday September 29th

- **Assignment# 2 Due**
- Oscar Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty"
- Katz, "The Undeserving Poor: Morals, Culture and Biology"
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 9 ("The Underclass: Culture and Race")

Thursday October 1st

- *Colors of Poverty*, Chapter 4 ("How Culture Matters")
- Krugman, "[Race, Class and Neglect](#)"
- Brooks, "The Nature of Poverty"
- Chiglinsky, "Poverty is not a Culture"

Week 7: Sources of Poverty: Social Causes

Tuesday October 6th

- *Poverty and Power*, ("The Social System and Poverty")
- Macleod, "Ain't No Making It."*

Thursday October 8th

- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 8 ("Family Size and Structure")
- *Colors of Poverty*, Chapter 7 ("Can Social Capital Explain Persistent Racial Poverty Gaps?")

Week 8: Race, Ethnicity and Poverty

Tuesday, October 13th

- **NO CLASS –FALL BREAK!**

Thursday October 15th

- *Colors of Poverty*, Chapter 1 (“Why is American Poverty Still so Colored?”)
- Conley, “Being Black, Living in the Red.”*
- Pager, Western & Bonikowski, “Discrimination in a Low Wage Labor Market”
- Hamilton et al., “Umbrellas Don’t Make it Rain”
- *Optional: The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 12, (“Discrimination in the Labor Market”)

Week 9: Poverty, Opportunity and Upward Mobility

Tuesday October 20th

- Rank, “Upward Mobility”
- Kraus et al. “[American Dream or Mirage?](#)”
- Leonhardt et al., “An Atlas of Upward Mobility Shows Path Out of Poverty”

Thursday October 22nd

- Corcoran, “Rags to Riches: Poverty and Mobility in the United States”
- Chetty et al., “Where is the Land of Opportunity?”

Week 10: Poverty & Education

Tuesday October 27

- Layton, “A Majority of U.S. public school students are in poverty”
Washington Post
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 11 (“Discrimination in Education”)
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 16 (“Equal Opportunity Policies” only pages 305-318)

Thursday October 29th

- *Colors of Poverty*, (“How Educational Inequality Develops”)
- Wysong et al., “Educating for Privilege.”*

Week 11: Social Welfare Policies / Incarceration

Tuesday November 3rd (Social Welfare Policies)

- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 13, “Welfare Programs”
- *Colors of Poverty*, Chapter 11 (“Coloring the Terms of Membership”)
- Furman, “Smart Social Programs” *New York Times*
- Keith-Jennings, “Limiting SNAP Doesn’t Boost Employment”
- *Optional*: Cancian and Danziger, “Changing Poverty and Changing Anti-Poverty Policies”

Thursday November 5th (Crime and Punishment)

- *Colors of Poverty*, Chapter 10 (“Punishment, Crime and Poverty”)
- Alexander, “Introduction”
- Alexander, Chapter 1, “Rebirth of a Caste”
- Alexander, Chapter 2, “The Lockdown”
- Feige, “The Problem with Bail”
- *Optional*: Taibbi, “Jailed for Being Broke”

Week 12: The Politics of Urban Poverty & Housing

Tuesday November 10th

- Rothstein, “The Making of Ferguson” Economic Policy Institute
- Patterson, “The Real Problem with America’s Inner Cities” *New York Times*
- Cohen and Dawson, “Neighborhood Poverty and African-American Politics”

Thursday November 12th

- **Assignment 3 Due**
- Friedman, “Public Housing and the Poor”
- Hunt, “The Tenants Revolt”
- Desmond, “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty”

Week 13: Political Participation & Representation of the Poor

Tuesday November 17th

- Schlozman Verba & Brady, “Democracy and Political Voice”
- Gilens, “The Preference/Policy Link”
- Bartels, “Economic Inequality and Political Representation”
- Bartels, “Unequal Democracy”

Thursday November 19th

- *Poverty and Power*, Chapter 6 (“The Political System and Poverty”)
- Bruch, Ferree and Soss, “From Policy to Polity: Democracy, Paternalism, and the Incorporation of Disadvantaged Citizens.”
- Hajnal, “Ferguson: No Peace Without Representation”

Week 14: Social Movements & Political Organizing

Tuesday November 24th

- **Assignment# 4 due**
- Piven and Cloward, “The Structuring of Protest”
- Jaffe, “Black Poverty is a State of Violence Too...”
- Myerson and Smith, “We’ll Need an Economic Program to Make #BlackLivesMatter”
- Thiessen, “Republicans Should Follow Ben Carson’s Lead on Black Lives Matter”
- Chen, “New York Fast Food Workers Win their Fight for 15”

--Thanksgiving Break: No CLASS Thursday November 26th--

Week 15: Solutions?

Tuesday December 1st

- Ryan, “A Better Way to Fight Poverty”
- Blank, “Who Should Help the Poor?”
- Schnurer, “A Business Model for Fighting Poverty”
- Darity and Hamilton, “Bold Policies for Economic Justice”
- Matthews, “More Evidence that Giving Poor People Money is a Great Cure for Poverty”
- Castle, “Is Cash With No Strings Attached the Answer to Poverty?”
- *Optional:* Berlin and Riccio, “Paying for Good Behavior”

Thursday December 3rd

- *Poverty and Power*, Chapter 11 (“Conclusion”)
- *The Economics of Poverty*, Chapter 17 (“Direction and Prospects”)

FINAL EXAMS DUE BY FRIDAY DECEMBER 11TH

Happy Holidays & Enjoy Winter Break