Course Goals and Objectives

In this course we will examine historical and contemporary issues, research, and theory important to the sociology of urban poverty and its spatial connections. There are dynamic and multi-faceted micro- and macro-level processes that reveal vast differences with regard to poverty and its lived experience among various groups in the urban context. This course is designed to provide and utilize a sociological perspective to help better grasp the challenges and complexities of urban poverty including but not limited to the following topics: crime and incarceration, deindustrialization, the family, health, immigration, labor markets, opportunity structures, political economy, race, segregation, and spatial inequality. The objectives of the course are the following:

1. To generate discussion and provide more clarity to the causes of urban poverty in the United States
2. To highlight the lived experience and consequences of poverty in the metropolis, with a particular emphasis on place and space
3. To engage critically with social policy interventions aimed at ameliorating poverty

Course Requirements

This is an upper-division course in sociology with the expectation that students taking the class have had some background in the principles of sociology, sociological theory, and research methods. However, because poverty in the urban metropolis invites interdisciplinary approaches, there are no prerequisites for the course which we believe will be enhanced by students bringing different perspectives to our discussions.

The course will be a combination of both lecture and discussion/exercises. Students are expected to come to class having read the required readings and be prepared to engage their peers with questions and discussion. We will typically introduce topics in the first class of each week and devote the second class to exercises and discussion of media treatments of poverty.

To facilitate discussion and student understanding of the core issues and debates concerning poverty in the American metropolis, students will write five policy briefs (1-2 pages) developing a specific argument they wish to present regarding the topics. Students are both expected to exhibit concise understanding of urban poverty in its various forms and also propose policy solutions based on one’s theoretical and methodological understanding.
In addition, students are required to complete a research project examining a topic of choice as it relates to the American metropolis. The project is a reflection of a student’s individual ability to develop a specific research question and analyze it using existing research literature, data sources, and policy discussions. The project will culminate in the form of a “poster presentation” session that will occur in the last class meeting of the quarter, giving students the opportunity to highlight and celebrate what they have learned, sharing with their peers, invited faculty members, and other attendees. The appendix of this syllabus contains numerous web resources that will help in formulating ideas but also carrying out the research.

Finally, there will be two in-class examinations in the class: a midterm and a final. Exams will consist of short-answer and longer essays with the expectation that students will elicit the ability to apply understanding of the meaning of core course concepts and the issues we address.

In sum your final grade will be based on the following requirements, each of which will be discussed in more detail in separate handouts on the course webpage:

1. Class participation/discussion (10%)
2. Five policy briefs (3% each, totaling 15%)
3. Research project/poster presentation (25%)
4. Midterm examination (25%)
5. Final examination (25%)

Course Outline

What follows is a week by week summary of topics and readings for the course. Required readings are compulsory and should be read prior to coming to class. Recommended readings are listed as additional resources that can be helpful for writing weekly policy briefs or for further exploration by interested and motivated students who wish to examine issues in more detail, be it in this or for future studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic and Required/Recommended Readings</th>
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<td>1a</td>
<td>Poverty: Introduction and Overview</td>
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Introduction to the course

Review syllabus

*Recommended background readings:*


Week  Topic and Required/Recommended Readings


1b  Poverty: Introduction and Overview

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


*Exercise and Discussion:*


2a  Slums and Racial Segregation

*Required:*


*Recommended:*

Week  Topic and Required/Recommended Readings


2b  Slums and Racial Segregation in the United States

Required:


Recommended:


Film and Discussion:  “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth”

Related Research Tool: Testbed for the Redlining Archives of California’s Exclusionary Spaces (T-Races).  http://salt.unc.edu/T-RACES/

3a  Economic Transformation, Globalization, and the Labor Market: Deindustrialization

Required:


Sandra Susan Smith. 2005. "'Don't put my name on it’: (Dis)Trust and Job-Finding
**Week 3b**

**Topic and Required/Recommended Readings**


*Recommended:*


**3b Economic Transformation, Globalization, and the Labor Market: Immigration**

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


<table>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic and Required/Recommended Readings</th>
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<td>Publications.</td>
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**Exercise and Discussion:**

View “The I-Phone Economy” ([http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/01/20/business/the-iphone-economy.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/01/20/business/the-iphone-economy.html?_r=0))

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<th>4a</th>
<th>Financing the Poor: From Exclusion to Extraction</th>
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<td><strong>Required:</strong></td>
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**Recommended:**

**Week 4b**  
**Financing the Poor: From Exclusion to Extraction**  

*Required:*  


*Recommended:*  


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**Week 5a**  
**Financing the Poor: From Exclusion to Extraction**  

*Exercise and Discussion:*  


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**Week 5b**  
**Midterm Examination**

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**Week 6a**  
**Poverty, Space, and Neighborhood Effects**  

*Required:*  


**Week 6b**

**Poverty, Space, and Neighborhood Effects: Food and Sustainability**

[note to instructors: we have highlighted “food and sustainability” as the primary themes in this module. However, instructors may insert another theme that is appropriate to their interests, topical knowledge, and course goals here.]

**Required:**


Weatherspoon, Dave, James Oehmke, and Assa Dembélé. 2013. “Price and Expenditure
**Week**

**Topic and Required/Recommended Readings**


*Recommended:*


**7a Race, Class, and Urban (Mis)education Systems**

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


*Exercise and Discussion:*


Clip from “Dangerous Minds” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBQl9noA7xY)
Week  Topic and Required/Recommended Readings

7b  Race, Class, and Urban (Mis)education Systems

Required:

Exercise and Discussion:

The case of the Harlem Children’s Zone (video and response):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Di0-xN6xc_w
http://gothamschools.org/2009/12/07/just-how-gullible-is-anderson-cooper/#more-28650

8a  Crime, Policing and Incarceration in the Metropolis

Required:

Massey, Douglas. 2007. Ch 3 “Reworking the Color Line”


Recommended:

Exercise and Discussion:
View trailer to *The New Jim Crow* (http://newjimcrow.com/about/book-trailer)

8b  Crime, Policing and Incarceration in the Metropolis

Required:
**Week**  
**Topic and Required/Recommended Readings**


**Recommended:**


**Exercise and Discussion:**


**9a**  
**Partnership, Family, and Managing Private Life**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**

Week  Topic and Required/Recommended Readings


*Exercise and Discussion:*

Watch: “Minority, Single Parent Families and Poverty”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wbBjt-5wG4

One policy response to reducing child/family poverty is often to promote marriage. Watch/read and critically engage with this policy response:

Mike Huckabee: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTTZkytmJdY


9b  Partnership, Family, and Managing Private Life

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


*Exercise and Discussion:*

Week  Topic and Required/Recommended Readings

Watch PBS Frontline “Let’s Get Married”
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/marriage/

10  The Future: Poverty as a Prospective Process


Discussion:

Poverty in the American Metropolis: Where do we go from here?

Course Summary and Student Presentation of Student Projects

Student in-class poster presentations

Final Examination: To be determined
Appendix: Additional Poverty Resources

What follows are lists of media/film treatments of poverty and useful web resources for further exploring the issue. With regard to the latter, students will find the data, policy briefs, and research papers particularly useful for formulating their own work.

Media and Film Treatments


National Poverty Research Centers

1. Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality: http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/
2. UC Davis Center for Poverty Research: http://poverty.ucdavis.edu/

Other Research Centers on Poverty

1. Case Western Reserve University Center for Urban Poverty and Community Development: http://povertycenter.case.edu/
3. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre: http://www.chronicpoverty.org/
4. Northwestern University/University of Chicago Joint Center for Poverty Research: http://www.jcpr.org/
5. Poverty in America Project at Massachusetts Institute of Technology: http://povertyinamerica.mit.edu/
6. UCLA Center for the Study of Urban Poverty: http://www.csup.ucla.edu/
7. University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research: http://www.ukcpr.org/
8. University of Michigan National Poverty Center: http://www.npc.umich.edu/about_us/
Additional Web Resources

1. Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data (http://datacenter.kidscount.org/)
2. The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program (http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro)
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/)
4. Class Structure and Class Consciousness (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/09323)
5. County Health Rankings (http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/#app/)
6. Detroit Area Studies (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/151)
7. FBI Uniform Crime Reports (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr)
8. General Social Survey (http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/)
10. Medical Expenditures Panel Survey (http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/)
11. Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (http://www.sociology.emory.edu/MCSUI/)
16. Panel Study of Income Dynamics (http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/)
17. State of the Nation’s Cities (http://policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/sonc/sonc.htm)
18. Syracuse Community Geography Project (http://www.communitygeography.org/)
20. The U.S. Conference of Mayors (http://usmayors.org/publications/)
21. The U.S. Bureau of Labor
   b. National Longitudinal Surveys (http://www.bls.gov/nls/)
22. The U.S. Bureau of the Census
   a. American Community Survey (http://www.census.gov/acs/www/)
   e. Survey of Income and Program Participation (http://www.census.gov/sipp/)
23. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/)