



**SSBT 546: POVERTY STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS**

Instructor: Lawrence Bresler

Intensive Weekend

Fall 2012

Office Phone: 216-651-2606

Office Location: 3500 Lorain Avenue, Rm. 501 A

CN: 5527

Class dates and hours: 9/7 - 9/9 and 10/6 – 10/7/2012

Email: lib2@case.edu

Mailing Address: Case/Mandel School

10900 Euclid Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44106-7164

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an understanding of poverty. The course examines poverty through an exploration of its causes, theory, policy strategies for its amelioration and practice implications. The course investigates the impact of poverty on single individuals, families with children, minorities, and vulnerable populations. The course will examine welfare reform and its impact in bringing people out of poverty. Students will examine one facet of poverty- its theories, policies, impacts on individuals and families, potential solutions, and our approaches to the issues as social workers.

In addition to assigned texts and readings, the course will be supplemented by practitioners, organizers and low-income persons addressing the issues of poverty.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to help you meet the following objectives:

**II. Course Objectives:**

<b>Student Learning Objectives</b>	<b>Learning Tasks</b>	<b>Learning Tools</b>
1. Understand the definition, scope, and theories of poverty and the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to it along with its historical context (Think critically about theory and research knowledge)	Definition of Poverty Paper; Poverty Quiz	Readings, discussions and reflections
2. Become aware of the impact that poverty has on individuals, families and children (Identify as a reflective social worker; Integrate cultural, economic, and global diversity)	Reflection on personal experiences	Readings, class lectures, videos, class speakers

3. Understand the theoretical development and social policy of the welfare reform in the 1990s and assess its impact and policy implications in today's practice as social workers (Think critically about theory and research knowledge, Identify as a reflective social worker; Advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice)	Examination of Ohio and national policies	Readings, class lectures, Class speaker
4. Develop a critical understanding of key poverty issues- its policies, impacts, potential solutions, and our approaches as social workers. (Apply social work practice methods; Advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice; Communicate effectively, Develop as a social work leader).	Class presentation on focused area; tour of Cleveland with poverty focus	Readings, presentations, and instructor supplemental material
5. Understand the ethical issues and professional dilemmas faced by social workers in their work with low-income persons.(Uphold social work values and ethics)	Discussion based on NASW Code of Ethics	Readings, discussions and reflections
6. Learn and assess how social workers, community organizers and low-income persons are working to address the issues of poverty, and how we can make an impact (Apply social work practice methods; Advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice; Communicate effectively, Develop as a social work leader)	How we address poverty as social workers paper	Personal experiences

### **III. Course Topics**

#### **Topics:**

- Definitions of Poverty
- Historical views of poverty as it shapes today's perceptions
- Theories of practice as used in macro and micro practice
- United States approach to poverty versus other countries
- Consequences and impact of poverty on individuals, families, minorities and vulnerable populations
- Policy implications on poverty
- Addressing impacts of poverty from a macro and micro perspective
- Organizing efforts to address issues of poverty
- How we as social workers can be addressing poverty
- Ethical approaches to poverty

## **IV. Course Reading**

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Rank, M. R. (2004). *One nation, underprivileged: Why American poverty affects us all*. New York: Oxford Press.

Iceland, J. (2012). *Poverty in America: A handbook*. Berkley, CA: University of Berkley Press.

### **Recommended Text**

Magnum, G. L., Magnum, S. L., Sum, A. M., & Levitan, S. A. (2003). *The persistence of poverty in the United States*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

### **Required Articles**

Additional required readings will be available on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.cwru.edu>), listed by class session. .

### **Use of Blackboard**

You are advised to get familiar with using blackboard. Throughout the semester, you will be expected to participate in a number of online discussions on topics relevant to the course.

Instructions to using blackboard: <http://www.case.edu/its/itac/blackboard/stuquickstart.html>

## **V. Instructor Responsibilities**

Deliver lectures relevant to learning goals and objectives.

Develop discussion and exercise materials.

Arrange for supplemental materials as needed.

Facilitate small group activities.

Read and comment on student assignments.

Evaluate student work and provide feedback.

Be available to respond to questions by individual students

## **VI. Student Responsibilities**

Attend class on time and actively participate in class sessions. (Please contact the instructor **in advance** if you will be absent)

Share ideas, learning, and experiences with the class.

Complete all assignments on time, including readings, logs and papers.

Provide feedback on identified learning needs as the course progresses.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student is unable to attend class, he/she must let the instructor know in advance. A message on the instructor's voice mail or e-mail is sufficient if it is sent before the class meets. Attendance will be taken at all class sessions. If the student

misses a class, the student is responsible for making up any missed work and for obtaining any other information that was disseminated in class. Students who miss more than 20% of class meetings, for any reason, will not be eligible to receive credit for the course and will be required to withdraw from it or receive a grade of F. In the Intensive Weekend program, students may not miss more than one day.. Instructors have the discretion to establish a stricter policy and list it in the course syllabus. Instructors may permit exceptions, with prior consultation from the Assistant Dean for Student Services and with a written plan signed by both the student and instructor of how time missed from class will be made up. Please note: it is not always possible to make up missed time because of the nature of some courses.

**CONFORMITY TO MSASS POLICIES**

Conformity to MSASS policies as they pertain to the Professional Code of Conduct, Plagiarism, and Incompletes as stated in the MSASS Student Manual.

- **Professional Code of Conduct** – Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, as well as inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination policies.
- **Plagiarism** – The submission of work done by another with the intent that it be viewed and evaluated as one’s own. Thus, copying on an examination, turning in a term paper or homework assignment done by someone else, intentionally using or presenting false data, and making extensive use of sources without acknowledging them are all interpreted as acts of plagiarism.
- **Incompletes** – A grade of Incomplete is given at the end of the semester only when a student has discussed the matter with his/her instructor and there are extenuating circumstances that clearly justify an extension beyond the requirements established for the other students in the class.

**STATEMENT ON DISABILITY**

Academic accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities. In order to access the accommodations for which you may be qualified, please register with the office of Disability Resources (ESS, Sears 470). The staff there will verify your need for specific accommodations and provide you with a memo to inform me of your needs. Once you have received this memo, please make an appointment to see me privately to discuss your needs. Please be aware that any needed accommodations cannot be implemented retroactively; therefore timely notification of your needs is in your best interest

**VII. Grading**

**Grading Criteria**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
A	4	93-100	Exceptional performance; consistently exceeds expectations
A-	3.7	91-92	Strong performance; often exceeds expectations

B+	3.3	89-90	Consistently meets and occasionally exceeds expectations
B	3	83-88	Meets expectations
B-	2.7	81-82	Sometimes falls short of expectations
C+	2.3	79-80	Often falls short of expectations
C	2	73-78	Unevenness or inconsistent in grasp of content and experience
C-	1.7	70-72	Very inconsistent in grasp of content and experience
F	0	Below 70	Complete lack of grasp of content and experience; does not meet minimal expectations
I	0	Incomplete	Automatically becomes an "F" by instructor if work is not completed within the specified time period
W	0		Official withdrawal

### **Online Course Evaluations**

Evaluations need to be completed within a two-week time frame: one week prior to and one week after the close of classes. The link for completing evaluations is as follows: <https://its-services.case.edu/course-evals/evaluate>

The evaluation serves several important functions. Personally, it allows you to reflect on the course and how it impacted your learning. Educationally, it allows the Curriculum Committee to assess the quality of the course in the overall programming for social work practice. Administratively, faculty use the feedback to improve instruction. Therefore, it plays a significant role in the school, and your full and careful attention is appreciated.

### **VII. Assignments**

Assignments must be turned in on the due date. Late submissions, unless due to compelling circumstances, will result in a loss of 10% of the assignment's grade per each day.

If your submission does not meet minimum standards (earning a grade of C- or below), you may be given one chance to redo the assignment in order to improve that assignment's grade to a B.

Assignments are designed so that students will be working either individually or in groups – as specified in the instructions – to accomplish various tasks.

#### **Attendance/Participation (10% of final grade):**

Participation points will be given based on attendance, preparedness, and active participation in class discussion, role plays, exercises, and community-based assignments. As a measurement of preparedness, students will submit short summaries of weekly readings prior to each class.

## **Assignment 1: 15 Points- What is your definition of poverty in the United States?**

Due: September 4, 2012 (by email)

Describe what you think the definition of poverty should be in the United States using references and citations from class readings and other resources. Give you definition, reasoning, how it would be implemented, and the potential impact on U.S policy. The paper should be a minimum of five pages (double spaced).

## **Assignment 2. – 30 points for class presentation and two page synopsis**

Presentation due October 6, 2012. In pairs or individually, students shall prepare the following presentation:

### ***Policy Area***

Students prepare a presentation on one poverty policy area: health care, homelessness, affordable housing, minimum wage/living wage, food, education, utilities or other policy area. Through research and talking with local experts:

- Identify the current problems,
- Discuss and evaluate the current policies and the theories underlying the policies to address the problems,
- Discuss how those policies impact the targeted populations
- Propose and review alternative solutions
- Discuss how social workers can be involved at a micro and/or macro level in working for solutions

### ***Organizational Examination***

Students select an agency or organization that through its services or activities is addressing the issues of poverty or the needs of those who are poor. It could be a current or past agency of employment, field placement agency an agency with which you have volunteered or an agency or organization with which you have an interest. Through your own research, interviews with people at the organization, and you own observations:

- Explain what the programs provided and/or issues addressed by the organization. Why were the services, programs or activities started?
- What are the poverty policy issues being addressed e.g. homelessness, affordable house, health care, child care etc.?
- How does the agency/organization's services, programs or activities help to alleviate or not alleviate the issues of poverty in the community?
- Analyze and evaluate the success of the services or activities of the agency in meeting the poverty needs of the community served
- Analyze and evaluate how the services or activities of the agency/organization fit within the context of the broader policy issue. Is such as program, service or activity needed? Should it be needed?

A different topic area can be used with approval from the instructor

### *Expectations for Any Topic Area*

In preparation for the class presentation the students, in consultation with the instructor will assign readings on their subject area prior to their class presentations. Students should use power point or for their presentations. Students will be graded individually if working in pairs. The two page synopsis should be a summary of the key points of the presentation.

### **Assignment 3: 30 Points-Concluding paper-Reflections on key topics and issues discussed in class and readings**

Due October 28, 2012

Drawing from your past experiences, class readings, and class discussions, reflect on five key areas as assigned by the instructor and can be found on Blackboard. The paper should be a maximum of 10 pages (double spaced)

### **Assignment 3: 15 points- How I as a social worker can approach issues of poverty**

Due: October 28, 2012

Based upon your professional direction/interests upon graduation from MSASS, explore as a social worker how you would address the issues of poverty (micro practice, macro practice or both). Use appropriate citations and references as appropriate. The paper should be about five pages (double spaced)

## **IX. Class Sessions**

### **Day 1, September 7: What is Poverty, Theories of Poverty, U.S. Poverty in a Global Context**

*Morning:* Introduction to Course. What is Poverty? Discuss definitions of poverty and poverty line.. Take and discuss poverty quiz

*Afternoon:* Tour of Cleveland from a poverty perspective exploring how issues of poverty have and have not been addressed. History of U.S approaches to poverty; Theoretical Approaches to Poverty and how they have been applied on an individual and general policy perspective.

#### *Readings for Day One:*

Poverty in America, Chapters 1-5

Persistence of Poverty in the United States, Chapter 5

One Nation Underprivileged, Chapters 1-6

Census Poverty Stats 2010

Air Conditioning, Cable TV, and an Xbox: What Is Poverty in the United States Today?

Backgrounder, The Heritage Foundation

Shipler, D. (2006). Connecting the Dots from Ending poverty in America (2007) edited by Edwards, John, Crain, Marion, and Kallenberg, Anne, Pages 13-22

American Social Policy 1950-1980, Pages 154-166 \*1966

Lewis, O. "The Culture of Poverty" from Scientific American pp 19-25

Quigley, W. (2003) Ending Poverty as We Know It, Chapters 4-5

Pp 122-132 and 153-160 in Barusch (2009) *Foundations of Social policy* Belmont: Brooks/Cole

Ohio United Way, *Budget for Low Income Working Families-2008* (passed out in class)

## **Day 2 September 8: Consequences of Poverty Impact on Families;**

*Morning:* United States Approach to poverty in comparison to other countries

*Afternoon:* How Poverty Impacts on Individuals, families and children, minorities and vulnerable populations

Videos: “*Children from Homeless Families*” from 60 minutes and *Waging a Living Education*, and

Speakers: Members of United Clevelanders Against Poverty

*Readings for Day 2:*

Yates, Michael. 2004. Poverty and inequality in the global economy. *Monthly Review* 55, no. 9 (February). <<http://www.monthlyreview.org/0204yates.htm>> (11 February 2004).

Silver, Hillary and Miller, S.M., *From poverty to social exclusion: Lessons from Europe from poverty and race in America*, (2006) edited by Hartman, Chester, Pages 57-70

One Nation Underprivileged, Chapter 7

Chapter 6 in *Poverty in America*

Bricker-Jenkins, Mary; Barbera, Rosemary and Young, Carrie, *Poverty Through the Lens of Economic Human Rights*, from book not yet published (2011)

Goodman, Peter S. 'Back At Square One': As States Repurpose Welfare Funds, More Families Fall Through Safety Net (2012)

## **Day 3 September 9: Organizing efforts to End Poverty and Welfare Reform**

*Morning:* Organizing efforts to end poverty

Video: Living Broke in Boom Times

*Afternoon:* Theory, and policy of welfare, welfare reform as implemented in Ohio, and assessment of welfare reform on practice

Speaker: Rick Werner, Director of Health and Human Services, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

*Readings for Day 3:*

Readings: *Poverty in America*, Chapter 7, Pages 118-147.

Abramovitz, Mimi, *Neither Accidental or Mean Spirited, the Context of Welfare Reform* from *The Promise of Welfare Reform* (2006) edited by Segal, E., & Kilty, K. Chapter 2

Ellwood, David (1988) *Poor Support Poverty in the American Family* (Two Page Excerpt).

Murray, Charles, *Stop Favoring Unwed Mothers* *New York Times*, January 16, 1992.

Segal, E., & Kilty, K, Political Promises for Welfare Reform. *Journal of Poverty* 9(1): 51-67

Haskins, Ron. (2006). *Welfare Reform, Success or Failure*. Brookings Institution.

Haskins, Ron, *House Ways and Means Testimony*, July 19, 2006.

Glazer, Sarah, *Welfare Reform* (2002), edited by Lin, Ann pp 1-17D., Harris., D., Grice S., Taquino, M., & Gill, D. (2005). Does TANF Work-First Initiative Help Low-Income Families Make Successful Welfare-To-Work Transitions. *Journal of Poverty* 9(1), 65-81.



Segal, Elizabeth, *Welfare as We Should Know it: Social Empathy and Welfare Reform. Reform* from The Promise of Welfare Reform (2006) edited by Segal, E., & Kilty, K. Chapter 21  
Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2011) Welfare Reform at Age 15  
Ratner, Lisa. (2011) The Failure of Welfare reform-punish the Poor

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Reinvesting in Ohio's Families  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/OWF/prc/PRCDRExecSumII.pdf>

**Day 4:** October 6 Issues Policy Presentation and Class discussion

Presentation of issues and policy presentations by students with class discussion and additional material presented by instructor.

*Readings for Day 4:* To be assigned by students

**Day 5:** October 7 Issue/Policy Supplemental topics not presented in presentations; Role of Social Workers to End Poverty; including ethical responsibilities

*Morning:* Supplemental issue discussion not covered in presentations; Discussion of examples of micro and macro strategies to address issues of poverty.

*Afternoon:* Based upon discussions had during the class discuss and design of a strategic framework to end poverty. What are the roles and activities that we as social workers can be doing to end poverty?

*Readings for Day 5:*

One Nation Underprivileged, Chapters 8-9

The Persistence of Poverty in the United States, Chapter 8, Pages 108-116

King, Martin Luther, (1968) Where do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community? Pages 161-166, 193-202

Edwards, John, *Conclusion, Ending Poverty in America* from Ending Poverty In America (2007) edited by Edwards, John, Crain, Marion, and Kallenberg, Anne, Pages 256-267.

Handler, Joel and Yeheskel, (2007) Blame Welfare, Ignore Poverty and Inequality. Chapter 8

Smiley, Tavis and West, Cornel, Chapter 7, *The Poverty Manifesto* from The Rich and the Rest of Us, (2012)

Baptist, Willie and Rehman, Jan, Chapter 11, *Teach as We Fight, Learn as We Lead: Lessons in Pedagogy and the Poverty Initiative Model* from Pedagogy of the Poor, (2011)

Community Research Partners, (2010) *The State of Poverty in Ohio: Building a Foundation for Prosperity*

