

**University of Memphis
Division of Social Work
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy**

**SWRK 7031: Rural and Urban Poverty
(3 Credit Hours)
Semester Year**

Prerequisite(s): Admission to the MSW Program or instructor approval

Instructor: M. Elena Delavega, PhD, MSW

Email: mdlavega@memphis.edu

Day – Time: Varies – See schedule

Place: Varies – See schedule

Office Phone: (901) 678-3270

Office Location: 117 McCord Hall

Office Hours: T-Th, 12 noon – 5 pm.

Course Description

This course examines the development and analysis of specific policies that impact rural and urban centers with high concentrations of poverty. Emphasis will be placed on the interaction effects of federal policies regarding crime, education, employment and housing, and federal and state income maintenance programs for the poor. The strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to policy development and analysis will be discussed.

Course Rationale: This Advanced Curriculum elective course is designed to expose social work and other students to the problems confronting the world today in the form of persistent and resistant poverty. This hybrid course utilizes an innovative pedagogic methodology to encourage students to explore all sides of this intractable problem through a variety of arguments. Students become enmeshed in the problematic through readings, analysis, role-plays, discussion, and debates. Students engage each other in experiential exercises mirroring the problem-solving sessions taking place in the corridors of power today, and in the process acquire an understanding of the arguments and theories proposed and opposed by the different camps. Through this course, students experience first-hand the difficulties in solving the problem of poverty.

The Honor Statement: An essential feature of The University of Memphis is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. *As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.*

Disability Statement: Any student with a documented disability that requires academic adjustment [assistance] is requested to make an appointment or discuss this matter via phone with the instructor as

early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Students should be familiar with and benefit from the services of the Office of Disability.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

Course Competencies: By the completion of this course, the students are expected to be able to demonstrate (through course activities and assignments):

- 1) Discuss the philosophical and ethical assumptions of policy development and analysis utilized in a variety of disciplines. **(Ethics-A1 Critical Thinking-A1, A2, Context A 2, Diversity A2)**. *(Role-plays and debates)*.
- 2) Discuss the differences and similarities of the social welfare issues facing rural and urban communities. **(Critical Thinking-A1, Context A1, A2, Assess A3)**. *(Field trip visits, reflection papers, readings and texts)*.
- 3) Synthesize complex social policies and their implementation through public programs. **(Critical Thinking-A1, A2, Context-A1)**. *(Role-play exercises and debates)*
- 4) Discuss the importance of intergovernmental relationships in the development, implementation, evaluation and evolution of social welfare policies for groups at-risk. **(Social & Economic Justice-A1, A2 Professional Conduct-A4, Intervene-A3)**. *(Field trip visits, reflection papers)*
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the interaction of major social policies on specific groups in poverty including but not limited to the elderly, female-headed families, single adults and the working poor from the local to the global levels. **(Research-A3 Assess A1, A2, A3, Policy A3)**. *(Role-plays, debates, texts, additional research and information-seeking, and reflection papers)*
- 6) Apply basic policy analysis techniques in order to recommend changes in organizational settings to better meet the needs of high risk groups. **(Ethics-A1, Research-A3, Policy A5)**. *(Role-plays, texts, additional research and information-seeking, and debates)*

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Final Grade: Your final grade will be computed on the following scale:

A+	100	C+	76-79.99
A	97-99.99	C	73-75.99
A-	93.5/30/2013-96.99	C-	70-72.99
B+	86-92.99	D+	65-69.99
B	83-85.99	D	60-64.99
B-	80-82.99	F	59.99 or below

Grade Distribution: The course grade will be computed on the following parts:

Class Participation and Performance – Role Plays	30% of the final grade
Reflection papers (4, 10% of grade each)	40% of the final grade
Key terms paper	10% of the final grade
Participation in 2 Field Trips (10% of the grade each)	20% of the final grade
Total	100%

Assignments

This course utilizes a modified version of “Reacting to the Past” methodology to teach “Reacting to Social Problems.” The course also consists of field trips to explore the reality of rural and urban poverty and reflection papers on the field trips, the role-playing game, and the entire experience. Students are graded on attendance and participation, reflection papers, understanding key terms, and performance during role-plays.

Role-Plays (Game):

Each student is assigned a character to play. The character has a history, personality, orientation, and specific goals. The student must read and understand the course materials and any other external materials the student needs in order to understand his/her character and goals. Students are required to attend the required class sessions designed to clarify points and obtain direction or re-direction, read, research, and internalize their assigned characters/roles. This will prepare students to participate in two days of intense role-plays geared toward the resolution of the social problem of poverty. Students will be partially graded based on performance during the role-play sessions (strength of the argument, evidence of reading and research done, involvement and investment with character and goals). Rubrics are provided.

Field Trips:

The course also consists of field trips to explore the reality of rural and urban poverty. On the last Tuesday of the course, students will participate in a field trip to the areas of urban poverty in the city of Memphis, and on the last Wednesday of the course, students will participate in a field trip to the Dyersburg area to explore rural poverty. Students are expected to provide their own transportation, but we will work together to coordinate carpools.

Reflection Papers:

Students will be required to write four (4) reflection papers throughout the course. Reflection papers will be due following each of the field trips (one reflection paper per field trip), the role-playing game, and at the beginning of the semester (reflecting on expectations). Each reflection paper must be 2 pages in length and adhere to APA guidelines (approximately 500 words each). Rubrics are provided.

Key-Terms Worksheet:

Students will receive a key-terms worksheet. Students will complete and return the worksheet to professor for a completion grade.

Additional Considerations:

Schedule: This is an intense, fast paced course. As a result, keeping to the schedule is paramount to the successful completion of this course.

Note that the instructor dismisses the class, not the students.

Attendance: It is your responsibility to come to class and to arrive on time. On the very rare occasion you must arrive late, it is your responsibility to be as little disruptive of others as you can be. On the very rare occasion a compelling reason forces you to leave the class early, please be as little disruptive as possible. **Note that attendance AND participation are part of your grade.** This means that if you are in class, you must be IN class. In order to achieve this, **no electronic devices of any kind are permitted in class, including, but not limited to, phones, iPods, iPads, and laptops. Note that the use of laptops is absolutely forbidden in class.**

Note: If you are having any problems with the course material, please come see me as soon as you become aware there is a problem. It is very important that we work together to help you achieve your academic goals regarding this course. Feel free to contact me with any questions/comments.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Readings:

The required readings are posted on eCourseware.

Millennium Development Goals – Available at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.shtml>

Recommended Books:

Collier, P. (2007). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

DeHaan, A. (2010). *Toward a new poverty agenda in Asia: Social policies and economic transformation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc. Diamond, J. (2011). *Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed: Revised edition*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Duncan, C.M. (1999). *Worlds apart: Why poverty persists in rural America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Easterly, W. (2006). *The white man's burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Ehrenreich, B. (2001). *Nicked and dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Fussell, P. (1983). *Class*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Moyo, D. (2010). *Dead aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- NASW (2009). *Social Work Speaks, NASW Policy Statements, 2006-2009* (7th Edition). Washington DC: NASW Press.
- Collins, C., & Yeskel, F. (2005). *Economic Apartheid in America: A primer on economic inequality & insecurity*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty: Economic possibilities for our time*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Sachs, J. (2008). *Common wealth: Economics for a crowded planet*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Shipler, D.K. (2004). *The working poor: Invisible in America*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.
- Smiley, T., & West, C. (2012). *The rich and the rest of us: A poverty manifesto*. New York, NY: SmileyBooks.
- Wilson, W.J. (1996). *When work disappears : The world of the new urban poor*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Yates, M. D. (Ed.). (2007). *More unequal: Aspects of class in the United States*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class Structure:

Session 1 (3 hrs.)	Tuesday Evening 5:30-8:30 pm McCord 100	Introduction Orientation and assignment of topic and roles Team-building exercises
Session 2 (3 hrs.)	Thursday Evening 5:30-8:30 pm	Check-in session to discuss problems and roles, and to clarify issues Role-play practice exercises First Reflection paper due
Session 3 (3 hrs.)	Tuesday Evening 5:30-8:30 pm	Check-in session to discuss problems and roles, and to clarify issues Role-play practice exercises Key Terms Worksheet due

Session 4 (3 hrs.)	Thursday Evening 5:30-8:30 pm	Check in session to discuss problems and roles, and to clarify issues Short role-play game to familiarize students to concept and clarify questions
Session 5 (6 hrs.)	All Day Tuesday – Off Campus 9:30 am – 3:30	Field Trip in Memphis – Experiencing Urban Poverty
Session 6 (10 hrs.)	All Day Wednesday – Off Campus	Field Trip in Dyersburg, TN – Experiencing Rural Poverty Urban Field Trip Reflection Paper due
Session 7 (8 hrs.)	All Day Thursday – UC 8:00 am – 4:00	Role plays UC Fountain View Rooms Rural Field Trip Reflection paper due
Session 8 (8 hrs.)	All Day Friday – UC 8:00 am – 4:00	Role plays UC Fountain View Rooms
Saturday following end of course	5:00 pm	Final Reflection papers due via email.