

Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2008

Soci 443UG – CRN 73885

T,Th 2:10-3:30, LA 106

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Office Hours: T,Th 1:10-2; W 11:00-12, and by appt.

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Purpose of the Course: This course will introduce students to the sociological study of poverty, emphasizing the causes and consequences of *poverty*, with less emphasis on “the poor.” After all, we are all potentially poor, a paycheck, an injury, a divorce away from poverty. We will look at poverty from the viewpoint of poor people in the United States, and then look at some of the causes and consequences of that poverty. Then, we will stretch our horizons to include global perspectives on poverty. Finally, we will ask what we can do about it.

Reading:

All students:

Berg, Joel. 2008. *All You Can Eat: How Hungry is America?* New York: Seven Stories Press. ISBN: 978-1583228548

Lister, Ruth. 2004. *Poverty*. Boston: Polity Press. ISBN: 978-0745625645

Articles on ERES, password soc443

NB: At some point in the semester, we will migrate over to Blackboard. This will be announced.

Graduate students: Use two of the following books (available through the Mansfield Library or a book vendor of your choice (e.g. The Bookstore, Fact and Fiction, Shakespeare & Co., Amazon, abebooks.com) in your final paper.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press.

Fraser, Nancy and Axel Honneth. 2003. *Redistribution or Recognition? : A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. New York: Verso.

Gilbert, Neil. 2002. *Transformation of the Welfare State: The Silent Surrender of Public Responsibility*. New York : Oxford University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere : An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.

Hobson, Barbara, et al, eds. 2002. *Contested Concepts in Gender and Social Politics*. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA : Edward Elgar.

Hobson, Barbara, Ed. 2003. *Recognition Struggles and Social Movements : Contested Identities, Agency and Power* . New York, NY : Cambridge University Press.

Lister, Ruth. 2003. *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. Second Edition. New York: NYU Press.

Offe, Claus. 1984. *Contradictions of the welfare state*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.

Pogge, Thomas. 2007. *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right: Who Owes What to the Very Poor?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Siim, Birte. 2000. *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain, and Denmark*. Cambridge University Press.

Requirements:**Undergraduates:**

Discussion and Attendance: You are required to have regular attendance and participate in class discussions. Good class discussion is essential for a solid understanding of the complexities of the subject. You will lose one point for each class missed.

Essays and Portfolio:

Over the course of the semester, you will be given the opportunity to respond to eight to ten assignments, either as a traditional short essay or in other ways that you feel might be more expressive of your thinking and response to the question. The instructor and the preceptor will comment on, but not grade, these assignments. At the end of the semester, as your “final exam,” you will submit your five best responses (refined as you see fit), along with a “cover sheet” that shows us how well you have understood and integrated the material from the course.

The essay topics will be posted on Blackboard one week before they are due.

Midterm: This will be semi-objective, to ensure that you have learned and understood the concepts discussed in the class. If you keep up with the lecture and the reading, it should be quite easy.

Paper or Project: For undergraduate students, an 8-10 page paper examining one socio-economic and/or political system and its approach to a specific poverty-related issue. This paper will include an introduction, literature review, presentation of the issue, discussion, conclusion and references to literature cited. You must include at least three peer reviewed articles. You will submit an annotated bibliography that includes these three articles. In addition, you must use and cite concepts from at least two separate chapters in Lister.

In the alternative, undergraduate students may substitute a “project,” for example a presentation to the class, a video, or a poster presentation. The project should be of an equivalent in content and analysis to a paper, but may use non-traditional means of expression. An annotated bibliography is still due even if you use the project option.

Optional omnibus credit: Undergraduate students are encouraged to attend the graduate seminar (time/day TBA) and earn an additional “omnibus” (SOCI 493) credit. As you know, after 12 credits, there is no charge for additional credits. Please contact me during the first week of class if you are interested.

Graduate students:

Discussion seminar: You will also be required to attend an additional discussion section, to which interested undergraduates are invited, at a time and place TBA. The purpose of the additional discussion is to give advanced students an opportunity to explore the subject matter covered in class in greater depth. Additional reading will be assigned.

Essays and Portfolio: Over the course of the semester, you will be given the opportunity to respond to eight to ten assignments, either as a traditional short essay or in other ways that you feel might be more expressive of your thinking and response to the question. The instructor will comment on, but not grade, these assignments. At the end of the semester, as your “final exam,” you will submit your five best responses (refined as you see fit), along with a “cover sheet” that shows me how well you have understood and integrated the material from the course.

Paper: a 15-20 page term paper addressing comparative approaches to poverty. The paper will compare two (or more) socio-economic and/or political systems and their approach to a poverty issue. The paper will be of publishable quality, including an introduction, literature review, presentation of the issue, discussion, conclusion, and references to literature cited. Graduate students will also be required to read an additional two books (from a list chosen by the instructor) that will help the students achieve graduate level comprehension and analytical

frameworks that they will use in their papers. You must include at least 10 peer reviewed articles, in addition to the analytical frameworks used in the books chosen from the list above.

Evaluation:

Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:

Midterm	50
Portfolio	100
Paper/Project Topic	5
Annotated Bibliography	20
Final paper/Project	100
Attendance	25
Total	300

Evaluation for Graduate Students:

Portfolio	100
Final Paper	200
Seminar participation	100
Total	400

Extra Credit: There will be a few opportunities for extra credit, for a maximum of 20 points. On occasion there will be a lecture or other presentation at the University that will be of value to the course. I will point these out, or you may bring them to my attention. If approved, I will grant up to ten points for attendance and a short (1 page) summary of the presentation, with a paragraph explaining why this event is of value to the course.

In addition, there are a few films that you may wish to view and report on that would also be of value to the course. Here is a short list of films that come to mind; you also may suggest a film, and if I find it worthwhile, a similar short report can also be awarded up to ten points (per film), for a total of twenty extra credit points. Again, the report must not only summarize the film, but also explain why the film is of value to the course.

Ladybird, Ladybird
Grapes of Wrath
The Bicycle Thief
Gandhi
How Green Was My Valley
To Kill a Mockingbird
Of Mice and Men
Oliver Twist (the 1948 or 2005 movie, not the musical)
Les Miserables
La Boheme
Heartland
Life & Times of Rosie the Riveter DVD 03404
The Great Depression VT 08202-08208
War on Poverty VT 08116-08120

Course Rules

1. Late assignments
 - a. Late essays will NOT be accepted.
 - b. Late portfolios will lose five points for each calendar day they are late.
 - c. Please try to take the midterm on the day and time it is scheduled. If missing the midterm is unavoidable, please arrange a make-up with the instructor as soon as possible, no later than the first class session after the missed exam.
 - d. Late papers will lose ten points for each calendar day they are late.
 - e. Incompletes will be given so long as you communicate your need for an incomplete no later than December 14.

2. Academic Misconduct
 - a. Academic misconduct is defined on pages 8 and 9 of the University of Montana Student Conduct Code
 - b. <http://life.umt.edu/sa/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>
 - c. The penalties of academic misconduct can be severe. Students have been expelled from school and denied degrees. Please see the penalties section starting on page 9 of the Conduct Code.
 - d. I will use a scanning software to check for plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.

3. Discussions
 - a. Learning happens in a multitude of formats; hearing, writing, reading, and discussing are all integral parts of the learning process.
 - b. The ability to ask questions and to engage in class discussion (which includes body language!) is a primary advantage of bricks-and-mortar education over on-line "course delivery systems."
 - c. But discussions must be respectful to those present AND to those who are absent. In no course is this of more importance than in the Sociology of Poverty.
 - d. Being respectful does not mean not disagreeing; disagreement and debate is central to this topic as well.

Sociology of Poverty
Fall 2009 Calendar (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
G	9/1-3	Introductions/ What is Poverty?		
		Poverty in the United States: a historical view	ERES Piven & Cloward, Chs 2&3	
2	9/8		ERES	
	9/10	Mean Things Happening VT 08206		
3	9/15	Guest: Daisy Rooks, Working Poor	ERES Ehrenreich	Essay 1
	9/17			
4	9/22	TBA	Lister: Intro, Ch 1 Berg: Intro	Essay 2
	9/24	Guest: Tessa Johnson, Poverello Center		
5	9/29	Measuring Poverty	Lister: Ch 2 Berg: Chs 1-5	Essay 3
	10/1			
6	10/6	Inequality and the Differential Experience of Poverty	Lister: Ch 3 Berg: Chs 6-7 Voices: Chs 1-2	Essay 4
	10/8			
7	10/13	Poverty and Social Exclusion Citizenship; Invisibility and Inclusion	Lister: Ch 4 Voices: Chs 3-7	Essay 5
	10/15			
8	10/20	Discussion/Review		Essay 6
	10/22	Midterm		
9	10/27	Discourses of Poverty	Lister: Ch 6 Berg: Ch 8 Voices: Ch 12-13	
	10/29	Poverty and American Values		
10	11/3	Poverty and Agency	Lister: Ch 7 Berg: Chs 9-11	Essay 7
	11/5			
11	11/10	Poverty, Human Rights, and Citizenship	Lister: Ch 8 Berg: Chs 12-15	Essay 8
	11/12			
12	11/17	Global Poverty		
	11/19			Annotated bibliography
13	11/24	Global poverty		
	11/26	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class		
14	12/1	Questions about papers/presentations		Portfolio
	12/3	Study Day		
15	12/8	TBA—presentations?		
	12/10	TBA—presentations?		

Papers Due: Dec. 14, 3:20-5:20