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SOCI 443.01: Sociology of Poverty

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Sociology of Poverty
SOCI 443
Fall 2016
T, Th 2:00-3:20

Professor:

Celia Winkler, J.D., Ph.D.
SS 323; 243-5843
Office Hours: T 3:30-5; W 2-2:50; Th 1-1:50 and by appointment
Celia.winkler@umontana.edu

Preceptor:

Lauren Dykstra
SS 332
Office Hours: T, Th, F 11-12

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 characteristics of “the poor.” After all, most of us are always potentially poor, often 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 examine some of the causes and consequences of that poverty. Then, we will stretch our horizons to include global perspectives on poverty, and finally, we will ask what we can do about it.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understanding the various national and international definitions of poverty and their significance.
- Familiarity with the major methods of measuring poverty.
- Understanding the prevalence of poverty in the United States, with attention to differences by race/ethnicity, region, and gender, and in an international context.
- Familiarity with the ways poverty is experienced in the lives of individuals.
- Introduction to the policies intended to end poverty or address its effects on individuals and society.
- Introduction to the political debates about the causes of and solutions to poverty.

Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies:

This course is one of the elective classes that count towards the Major and the Minor in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, please contact me or drop by the WGSS office, LA 138A-B, or visit the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies website <http://hs.umn.edu/wgss/>

Reading:

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Lister, Ruth. 2004. *Poverty*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Roy, Ananya, et al. 2016. *Encountering Poverty: Thinking and Acting in an Unequal World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Readings on Moodle.

Requirements:

Discussion and Attendance (“Engagement”):

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. Especially important is attendance on those days when we have guest lectures and presentations. On those days, you will lose two points for every class missed.

Exams:

There will be two in-class “objective” midterm exams, and one in-class final essay exam.

Evaluation:

Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:

Objective Midterm I	40
Objective Midterm II	40
Essay Final Exam	50
Engagement	20
Total	150

Housekeeping

Late/Early Exams

Please try to take the midterm on the day and time it is scheduled. If missing the midterm is unavoidable, there will be one make-up exam given, no later than the first class session of the following week.

The final exam is scheduled for Thursday of finals week. There's nothing I can do about that. I will schedule earlier exams for documented conflicts. If you need to leave earlier for winter break, please see me no later than November 23, and email me if something comes up at the last minute that requires you to miss the scheduled final exam. We will discuss options, but I'm afraid they will be limited.

The policy for incompletes is available on the University of Montana website at:
<http://www.umt.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policy-procedure2.php>

Academic Misconduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at
http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.

Respect

Learning happens in a multitude of formats; hearing, writing, reading, and discussing are all integral parts of the learning process. 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. 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. Being respectful does not mean not disagreeing; disagreement and debate is central to this topic as well. Simply treat others with the respect you would want for yourself, your child, your grandparent.

Disabled Students

University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with

you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification. Please see the Disability Services for Students website for more information: <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>

Diversity

This class will attempt to further the position of the University of Montana on diversity:

The University of Montana respects, welcomes, encourages, and celebrates the differences among us. In recognition of this commitment, we value all members of the campus community, not in spite of, but because of their differences. A campus that expects, reflects, and respects diversity influences the way our students perceive the world. A diverse campus community enriches all of us with a greater understanding of the human condition and the challenges all people must confront in a rapidly changing, increasingly globalized, and ever more interdependent world society.

Please see the UM Diversity website for essential resources and information: <http://life.umt.edu/diversity/>

Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2016 * Outline

Please note that the reading assignments are subject to change as I find new or more interesting articles. This will not increase the total amount of reading assigned.

Week 1 History and the Experience of Poverty in the United States

Read: Piven & Cloward (Moodle)

Week 2 Eviction and Current Poverty Policies

Read: Desmond, Part I

Week 3 Defining Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 1, "Defining Poverty"

Week 4 Measuring Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 2

Read: Desmond, Part II

Week 5 Midterm I/Differential Experience of Poverty

Tuesday: Midterm I

Thursday: Read: Berg, Chap 7 (Moodle)

Week 6 Causes of Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 3, "Inequality, Social Divisions, and the Differential Experience of Poverty"

Read: Desmond, Part III

Week 7 Causes of Poverty—Race

Read: Moynihan Report (Moodle)

Read: Interview with Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow (Moodle)

Read: Interview with Todd Clear, Failure of Mass Incarceration (Moodle)

Read: Coates on the Black Family (Moodle)

Week 8 Causes of Poverty--Gender

Read: Abramovitz (Moodle)

Read: Hays (Moodle)

Week 9 Midterm II/Political Battles

Tuesday: Midterm II

Thursday: Social Exclusion

Week 10 Political Battles over Policies

Read: Lister, Chapter 4, "Poverty and Social Exclusion"

Read: TBA

Week 11 Political Battles over Policies

Read: Lister, Chapter 5, "Discourses of Poverty: From Othering to Respect"

Read: TBA

Week 12 Global Poverty and Activism

Read: *Encountering Poverty*, Chapters 1 & 2

Read: Lister, Chapter 6

Week 13: Global Poverty and Activism

Tuesday: Read *Encountering Poverty*, Chapter 3

Thursday: Thanksgiving

Week 14: Global Poverty and Activism

Read: *Encountering Poverty*, Chapter 5

Read: Lister, Chapter 7

Week 15: Presentations and Review

Final Exam

In-Class Essay Exam Thursday, Dec 15 at 3:20