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SOCI 443.01: Sociology of Poverty

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Sociology of Poverty
SOCI 443
Fall 2018
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

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. In addition to our main focus on the United States, 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.umt.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.

Readings on Moodle.

Syllabus and Moodle:

The syllabus is a one-stop document that constitutes the contract between me (the instructor) and you (the student). It can, however, be modified if necessary. Examples of situations calling for modification: the dates appear to be facially erroneous; illness or other emergency requires changing the order the material is presented or the date of an exam; current affairs may require changing topics, reading assignments, or the order the material is presented. In the event of such a situation, notice will be given and changes will be made on Moodle, and Moodle will supersede the syllabus. Note, however, that if

the proposed changes constitute a hardship to you, it will be my responsibility to ensure that you are not disadvantaged.

Requirements:

Undergraduate 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.

Graduate Discussion and Attendance (“Engagement”):

In addition to the undergraduate engagement requirements, we will also meet for about 30 to 45 minutes per week to discuss your individual projects and to add a graduate level of inquiry to the course. The time/place will be decided at a short meeting after class on Thursday of Week 2 (September 6).

Exams:

There will be two in-class “objective” midterm exams. I will give you a study guide one week before the exam, and we will devote about ½ of the class before the exam to review.

Undergraduate Presentation or Paper:

You have a choice between making a presentation to the class about an issue of relevance to the class or writing a five-page paper.

Presentation: Presentations will take place the last 2.5 weeks of class. In addition to the presentation, you must submit summaries of a minimum of three peer-reviewed publications (using my format). You may, if you want, create a group presentation, but each person must submit their own summaries. Groups will grade their members with regard to participation.

Paper: The paper will be a minimum of five pages with three peer-reviewed publications on a topic relevant to the course, together with the summaries of the three peer-reviewed articles.

Graduate Presentation and Paper:

Graduate students must write a paper AND present its content to the class. The paper must be a minimum of ten pages, with a minimum of five peer-reviewed publications. The presentation will take place the last week of the course.

Evaluation:

Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:

Objective Midterm I	30%
Objective Midterm II	30%
Article Summaries	15%
Paper or Presentation	15%
Engagement	10%
Total	100%

Evaluation for Graduate Students:

Objective Midterm I	15%
Objective Midterm II	15%
Paper	50%
Presentation	10%
Engagement	10%
Total	100%

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, in the absence of extenuating circumstances.

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://www.umt.edu/diversity/>

Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2018 * 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 Defining Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 1, "Defining Poverty"

Week 3 Housing, Income, and Work

Read: Desmond, Part I

Week 4 Measuring Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 2

Read: Desmond, Part II

Week 5 Differential Experience of Poverty/Race, Gender, and Intersectionality

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

Read: Desmond, Part III

Discuss: Paper/Presentation Topics

Week 6 Midterm I/Library Research Instruction

Tuesday: Midterm

Thursday: Library research instruction

Week 7 Causes of Poverty—Race

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

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 Political Battles

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

Read: TBA (focus on global poverty and the refugee crisis)

Week 10 Political Battles/Global Poverty

Read: Lister, Chapter 6, "Poverty and Agency: From Getting By to Getting Organized"

Read: TBA

Week 11 Global Poverty and Activism

Tuesday: No class – election day

Read: Lister, Chapter 7, “Poverty, Human Rights, and Citizenship”

Article Summaries Due November 8

Week 12: Midterm II

Tuesday: Global Poverty & Activism, Continued

Thursday: Midterm

Week 13: Presentations

Tuesday: Presentations

Thursday: Thanksgiving Break – No Class

Week 14: Presentations

Week 15: Presentations and evaluation

Final Exam Day: Tuesday, December 11

Papers and article summaries are due; submit on Moodle.