

# SOC 4370: POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:45pm  
Fall 2009, AH3, 1.310

## Syllabus

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Office hours: GR 3.202, Tuesday 4:30-6:30pm and by appointment.  
<http://www.utdallas.edu/~jargo>

**Introduction.** The United States is an extremely affluent nation, yet there are pockets of persistent poverty and unemployment. Moreover, even before the recent recession, inequality was increasing and wages for entry-level jobs were stagnant, while employment-related benefits were in decline. Are these trends inevitable? Are they necessary corollaries of a market economy? Do our current set of programs and policies help, or do they actually make things worse?

Should public policy address poverty and unemployment, or does government intervention only make matters worse? This course will examine poverty from both economic and sociological perspectives. Related topics such as education, racial segregation, housing and community development, and access to health care will be addressed in terms of their relation to poverty and unemployment. Topics will include the empirical trends in poverty and inequality, the dimensions of poverty and its consequences, the determinants of the income distribution, and the analysis of public anti-poverty programs.

A key of the objective of the class is to impart *specific knowledge* about the history, current situation, consequences, and public policies in the areas of poverty and unemployment. Equally important, however, is that students develop a *capacity to analyze* issues in these areas, to formulate policy positions, and to develop clear and informed arguments to support their positions. Note that the objective is not develop a consensus, or to convince students of any particular point of view. There is no “correct” answer in most cases, because the correct policy to respond to some aspect of poverty or unemployment depends both on facts, which are not known with certainty, and values, which differ from individual to individual. In the class, we will need to respect one another’s positions, but also to analyze and challenge those points of view in a respectful manner.

### Course Requirements.

Students will be expected to complete three brief (3-5 page) written assignments, including a data analysis assignment, and a policy analysis memo, and a book review.

Class participation will also factor into the grade. To participate effectively in class, you must do the reading and listen carefully to the arguments made by your fellow students. Class participation is measured by weight, not by volume.

Several *unannounced* quizzes during the semester will focus on the assigned reading and previous lectures. These count toward/against class participation.

There will be three in class exams on the dates indicated on the schedule. These will draw on the readings and lectures. They are open note and open book. There will not be a final.

Written Assignments, 3 @ 15% each	45%
Exams, 3 @ 15% each	45%
Class Participation	10%

**Scholastic Dishonesty.** Please be advised that scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated during the class. That means that you may neither give nor receive assistance from any person during a quiz or examination. Further, in written work, you may not plagiarize, which is defined as using the words or ideas of another person or organization without appropriate attribution. I will follow the standard University procedures in cases of suspected academic dishonesty. For a first offense, I will recommend a grade of zero on the assignment in question. For a second offense, I recommend expulsion from the University.

**Course web site.** Readings, assignments, and important messages will be posted on the course web site on eLearning (aka WebCT). Important: unless you intend to check your WebCT mailbox regularly, set up mail forwarding. To do this, go to the "Mail" page, choose "Message Settings" and enter the email address you monitor most frequently.

**Readings.** The following books have been ordered and will be used extensively. These texts are also on reserve. Additional books and materials will be placed on reserve or posted on the course website on WebCT.

Jason Deparle, *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*. New York: Penquin Books, 2004. ISBN: 0143034375.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Henry Holt, 2001. ISBN: 0805063897.

John Iceland, *Poverty in America: A Handbook*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. ISBN: 0520239598.

Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1996. ISBN: 0465032109.

Mark Rank. *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. ISBN: 0195189728.

Other readings will be placed on the web site as PDF files, links to web sites, or handed out in Xerox form.

### **Other Class Rules.**

- Power down or silence your cell phones, pagers, etc.
- No laptop computers may be used in class.
- Notify me by email *in advance* if you need to miss a class for a valid reason (e.g. illness, family emergency).
- Early or late exams will not be given except in exceptional circumstances.

**Tentative Schedule and Readings.** Note: Revisions to the schedule and changes/additions to the readings will be posted on the web site and announced in class. This schedule is for general planning purposes. Always check the web site for the latest information!

<b>PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS</b> <b><i>CHECK WEB SITE FOR REVISIONS!</i></b> <b>Last Updated: August 20, 2009</b>		
August 20	Thurs	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>
25	Tues	<b>What is Poverty?</b> Iceland, Chapter 3 Rank, Chapter 1 John Cassidy, "How Poor is Poor?," <i>The New Yorker</i> , April 3, 2003.
27	Thurs	<b>Who is Poor?</b> Iceland, Chapter 4 Rank, Chapter 2 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007, P60-235 (August 2008), pp. 12-18.
September 1	Tues	<b>What Causes Poverty?</b> Iceland, Chapters 5-6 Rank, Chapter 3 U.S. Bureau of the Census, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007, P60-235 (August 2008), pp. 1-11.
3	Thurs	<b>Spatial Dimensions of Poverty</b> TBA
8	Tues	<b>Unemployment: Definitions and Trends</b> TBA
10	Thurs	<b>The Low-wage Labor Market</b> Ehrenreich, Introduction and Chapter 1
15	Tues	Ehrenreich, Chapters 2-3
17	Thurs	Ehrenreich, Evaluation and Afterword
22	Tues	<b>Reasons to Address Poverty, or Not</b> Rank, Chapter 4-6 <i>Data Analysis Assignment Due</i>
24	Thurs	<b><i>Examination 1</i></b>
29	Tues	<b>Historical Perspectives on Poverty and Unemployment</b> Iceland, Chapter 2 Katz, Chapters 1-2
October 1	Thurs	<b>What Happened to the Poorhouse?</b> Katz, Chapters 4 and 6 (5 is optional)
6	Tues	<b>The Great Depression and the New Deal</b> Katz, Chapters 7-8 DeParle, Chapter 2
8	Thurs	<b>The Great Society, Civil Rights, and Welfare</b> Katz, Chapters 9-10 DeParle, Chapter 3-4
13	Tues	<b>Welfare Reform: From AFDC to TANF</b> DeParle, Chapters 1, 5-9

15	Thurs	<b>The Current Situation</b> DeParle, Chapters 10-18
20	Tues	<b>Policy Perspectives</b> Rank, Chapter 7-9 <i>Policy Analysis Assignment Due</i>
22	Thurs	<i>Examination 2</i>
27	Tues	<b>Social Security</b>
29	Thurs	<b>Medicare and Medicaid</b>
<b>November</b> 3	Tues	<b>The Uninsured</b>
5	Thurs	<b>Employment and Training</b>
10	Tues	<b>Education Reform</b>
12	Thurs	<b>Social Services and Child Protection</b>
17	Tues	<b>Community Development 1</b>
19	Thurs	<b>Community Development 2</b>
24	Tues	<b>Homelessness and the “Underclass”1</b>
26	Thurs	<b>No class. Thanksgiving Holiday.</b>
<b>December</b> 1	Tues	<b>Homelessness and the Underclass 2</b> <i>Book Review Assignment Due</i>
3	Thurs	<i>Examination 3</i>

*The material that follows is standard text recommended by the University.*

#### ***Student Conduct & Discipline***

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

#### ***Academic Integrity***

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

### ***Withdrawal from Class***

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

### ***Student Grievance Procedures***

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

### ***Incomplete Grade Policy***

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

### ***Disability Services***

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be

substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

### ***Religious Holy Days***

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.