

Sociology 124
THE SOCIOLOGY OF POVERTY
Fall 2019
Professor Sánchez-Jankowski
Office Hours: Tuesday 9:45-11:45 in 470 Barrows Hall

This course will explore the sociology of poverty. In that regard, it will examine a number of theories on the causes of poverty, and then turn to the consequences of poverty for the people who live in it. Although the course will focus a good deal of attention on poverty in the US, there will be readings and lectures that deal with it in other societies as well. For the US we will look at the history of poverty in the US, the everyday lives of the poor, the social problems experienced as a result of poverty, and finally the role of social policy in the cycle of poverty. In addition, the course will address the role that poverty has played in the everyday lives of the divergent ethnic groups that have had it as part of their cultural experience in America. In this regard, the course will examine the interactive impact that poverty has had on the various cultures of the ethnic groups that have had a history of confronting persistent poverty and compare their experience with those groups that have had a history of experiencing poverty temporally. Finally, while there has been in recent times an urban bias to the study of poverty we will include poverty in rural areas as well. I have order 6 books for the course: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*; Cynthia Duncan, *Worlds Apart*; Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*; Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*; Jason Corburn and Lee Riley, *Slum Health*; and Corey Abramson, *The End Game*. You will need to have access to them all because the exams will utilize each in their entirety.

REQUIREMENTS: There are three requirements for this course. First, a number of books have been order for the course. You will need to have access to them—buying, renting, or borrowing—and you will be required to read each with a keen eye to the overall argument that they advance as well as the evidentiary basis for their conclusions. Second, there will be two in-class exams and one final exam. Each will count equally toward your final grade. These exams will have 3 Essay-answer questions. Completion of all the exams is required. If for reasons of illness or a death to a member of the immediate family the student is not able to take the exam, then a make-up exam will be offered. For an illness, a doctor's note telling me that it was impossible for you to perform the tasks on the exam is required. For a death in the immediate family, a note from a family member with a phone number to call for verification is required. If students do not have either of these verifications, they will not be excused and will receive an "F." Third, classroom participation is required. This will be done in the following way: each student will be assigned to a group and each group will be responsible for making an in-class oral multi-media presentation on the issues assigned for study that week. Each student in the group will be responsible for contributing to the group's presentation as well as orally taking the class through their assigned aspect of the topic. This will count as everyone's classroom participation. If the presentations are judged to be done "satisfactorily," the students in that group will be given a "satisfactory grade" for classroom participation. This "satisfactory" classroom participation evaluation

will be applied to the student's final grade in the following way: After calculating the final mean grade from the exams and placing that score on the grading scale provided at the bottom this syllabus, the student will be given the next higher half-grade on that scale for a final grade. For example if the student earned a mean test score grade of 88 which corresponds to a "B+" grade they will be given an "A-" grade as result of their class participation for a final grade in the course.

EXAM DATES: September 30th for Exam # 1, November 4th for Exam # 2, and Final Exam in December (Date, Time and Place will be announced in class).

GRADING: The instructor has developed all the exams for the course. In this regard, the instructor has written the questions and the answers to these questions for the reader to follow. In this way, the students will know that there was an answer for each of these questions and this answer was consistently applied to each student on each question. Every question is of equal weight and so is every exam. Thus, the final exam is one third of the student's final grade. For each exam the student will be given a point sum and a letter grade. A+= 100-96; A= 95-92; A-= 91-90; B+= 89-87; B= 86-83; B-= 82-80; C+= 79-77; C= 76-73; C-= 72-70; D+= 69-67; D= 66-63; D-= 62-60; F= 59-0. The formula for your final grade is determined by adding up the scores on your three exams, dividing by three to determine your mean score, placing that score on the scale provided above, and then assigning the appropriate letter grade. Finally, for those students who are taking the course on a pass/no pass basis, you must receive a C- or better on each of the exams to receive a pass grade. If any one of your exams falls below the C- level you will be given a "no pass" grade. This is because the Final Exam includes new material from the final third of the course (as well as material from the first two thirds) and in order for me to "officially" say that you passed all the material in the course you will need to pass each exam, including the final, where there is new material.

Week 1

September 9: Nature of Poverty: Extent, Concepts and Definitions

Readings: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*

Week 2

September 16: Causes of Poverty

Reading: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*

Week 3

September 23: Structure and Culture in Rural American Poverty

Readings: Duncan, *Worlds Apart*

Week 4

September 30: **EXAM # 1**

Reading for following week: Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*

Week 5

October 7: Structure of Urban Poverty

Reading: Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*

Week 6

October 14: Structure and Culture in Poor Areas

Readings: Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*

Week 7

October 21: Culture and Poor Neighborhoods

Reading: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*

Week 8

October 28: Social Change and Poor Neighborhoods

Reading: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*, Continued

Week 9

November 4: **EXAM # 2**

Reading for following week: Corburn and Riley, *Slum Health*

Week 10

November 11: Disease in Poor Areas

Reading: Corburn and Riley, *Slum Health*

Week 11

November 18: Health in Poor Areas

Reading: Corburn and Riley, *Slum Health*

Week 12

November 25: Aging and Inequality

Reading: Abramson, *The End Game*

Week 13

December 2: Review

Readings: Abramson, *The End Game*

FINAL EXAM: DATE, TIME, AND PLACE WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS