

Sociology 124
THE SOCIOLOGY OF POVERTY
Fall 2022

Professor Sánchez-Jankowski

Office Hours: By appointment via email in 470 Social Science Building

This course will explore the sociology of poverty. In that regard, it will examine several 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 ordered 8 books for the course: Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*; Cynthia Duncan, *Worlds Apart*; Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Potholes in the Road*; Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*; Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*; Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*; James Patterson, *America's Struggle With Poverty*; 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 two requirements for this course. First, several books have been ordered 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."

EXAM DATES: September 28th for Exam # 1, November 9th for Exam # 2, and Final Exam in December 14, 3-6 (Location to be Determined).

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 every 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: INTRODUCTION

August 25: The Course

Readings: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Pp.3-174.

Week 2: CONCEPTS INVOLVED IN STUDY OF POVERTY

August 30: Measurement of Poverty

Reading: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Pp. 3-174 (Continued)

September 1: Theories of Poverty

Week 3: RURAL POVERTY

September 6: Structure and Culture in Rural American Poverty

Readings: Duncan, *Worlds Apart*, Pp. TBA.

September 8: Politics of Poverty

Week 4: RURAL TO URBAN POVERTY

September 13: Push in the Relocation Process

Reading: Duncan, *Worlds Apart*, Pp. TBA

September 15: Pull Factors in the Relocation Process

Week 5: URBAN POVERTY

September 20: Geography of Poverty

TEST # 1.

September 22: Politics of Reproduction in Urban Poverty

Reading: Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*, Pp. TBA

Week 6: STRUCTURE OF URBAN POVERTY**September 27:**

Readings: Patrick Sharkey, *Stuck in Place*, Pp. 1-352

September 29: Structural Elements in Formation and Reproduction of Poverty

Week 7: CULTURE AND URBAN POVERTY

October 4: Culture and Poor Neighborhoods

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

October 6: Resilience in Poor Neighborhoods

Week 8: POVERTY AND HEALTH

October 11: Causes

Reading: Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, Pp. TBA

October 13: Responses to Structural Strains

Week 9: POVERTY AND HEALTH (CONTINUED)

October 18: Causes of Limited Housing Access

Reading: Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, Pp. TBA

October 20: Social Life on the Edge

Week 10: POVERTY AND EDUCATION

October 25: Inheritance and Labor Market

Reading: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Potholes in the Road*.

October 27: Politics and Culture

Week 11: POVERTY, CRIME AND VIOLENCE

November 1: **TEST # 2**

November 3: Crime and Violence Origins

Reading: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Islands in the Street*.

Week 12:

November 8: Crime and Violence Origins

November 10:

Week 13: INEQUALITY AND THE LIFE COURSE

November 15: Disease

Reading: Corey Abramson, *The End Game*

November 17: Health

Reading: Corey Abramson, *The End Game*

Week 14: POVERTY AND POLICY

November 22: Environment, Body, and Aging

Reading: James Patterson, *America's Struggle With Poverty*

November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15 POVERTY AND POLICY (Continued)

November 29: Addressing the Policy Question of “The Poor”

Reading: Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Pp. 175-195

Cynthia Duncan, *Worlds Apart*, Chapter 4

December 1: Review

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