

Sociology 124
THE SOCIOLOGY OF POVERTY
Fall 2024

Professor Sánchez-Jankowski

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-1:00 in 470 Social Science Building

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 because 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: 1. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); 2. Jason Corburn and Lee Riley, *Slum Health: From the Cell to the Street* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); 3. Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement: Social Change and Resilience in Poor Neighborhoods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); 4. Teresa Gowan, *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders: Homelessness in San Francisco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); 5. Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Potholes in the Road: Transition Problems Among Low-Income Students in High School* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022); 6. Daryl Collins, Jonathan Murdoch, Stuart Rutherford, and Orlanda Ruthven, *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); 7. Ann Tickameyer, Jennifer Sherman, and Jennifer Warlick, eds., *Rural Poverty in the US* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); 8. Corey Abramson, *The End Game: How Inequality Shapes Our Final Years* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). 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, a number of 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: **October 3rd** for Exam # 1, **November 7th** for Exam # 2, and **December 18** (3-6 PM) Final Exam.

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 29: The Course Introduction

Week 2: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES IN THE STUDY OF POVERTY

September 3: Measurement of Poverty

September 5: Theories of Poverty

Reading: Leif Jensen and Danielle Ely, “Measures of Poverty and Implications for Portraits of Rural Hardship,” in Ann Tickameyer, et. al., eds., **Rural Poverty**, Chapter 3

Assignment: Do the exercise on page 70 and make two copies, one to hand in and the other for yourself when we discuss it. DUE in Class September 10.

Week 3: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND POVERTY: MACRO ISSUES

September 10: Geographic and Resource Issues

Assignment Exercise Due at start of class

September 12: Social and Political Issues

Reading: Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Pp. 3-156 (Continued)

Week 4: LIVING WITH POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

September 17: Basic Needs

September 19: Social Needs

Reading: Reading: Daryl Collins, et. al., *Portfolios of the Poor* (Whole Book)

Week 5: RURAL POVERTY

September 24: Geography of Poverty

September 26: Social and Economic Factors

Readings: Ann Tickameyer, et.al., eds., *Rural Poverty in the US*, Chapters 1,2,4,5,6 (137 pages)

Week 6: DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: STRUCTURE

October 1: Structural Elements in the Management of Poverty

October 3: TESTE # 1

Readings: Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*, Pp. 1-176

Week 7: DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: CULTURE

October 8: Culture and Poor Neighborhoods

October 10: Resilience in Poor Neighborhoods

Reading: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*, Pp. 176-354.

Week 8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS POVERTY RESIDUALS

October 15: Homelessness: Issues

October 17: Homelessness: Social and Economic Life

Reading: Teresa Gowan, *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders*, Pp. xiii-180

Week 9: MODERNISM'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

October 22: Causes of Limited Housing Access

October 24: Social Life on the Edge

Reading for following week: Teresa Gowan, *Hobos, Hustlers, and Backsliders*, Pp. 181-292.

Week 10: HUMAN CAPITAL AND POVERTY

October 29: Structure and Educational Attainment

October 31: Culture and Educational Attainment

Readings: Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Potholes in the Road* (Whole book).

Week 11: POVERTY, CRIME AND VIOLENCE

November 5: Opportunities in Creating Knowledge and Expertise

November 7: TEST # 2

Reading: TBA

Week 12: HEALTH AND ECONOMIC LIFE

November 12: Health and Poverty

November 14: Disease and Being Poor

Reading: Corburn and Riley, *Slum Health*, TBA

Week 13: INEQUALITY AND THE LIFE COURSE

November 19: The Body in the Life Course

November 21: Environment and Aging

Reading: Corey Abramson, *The End Game* (Whole Book)

Week 14: INEQUALITY AND THE LIFE COURSE

November 26: Chance and Choice in the Aging Process

November 28: Thanksgiving Holiday

Reading: Corey Abramson, *The End Game* (Continued)

Week 15: POVERTY AND POLICY

December 3: Addressing the Policy Question of “The Poor”

Reading: Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, Pp. 156-195

Martín Sánchez-Jankowski, *Cracks in the Pavement*, Pp. 352-54

Jason Corburn and Lee Riley, eds., *Slum Health*, Chapters 13, 14

December 5: Review

FINAL EXAM: TBA