

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Research Preparation: Politics of Poverty
Political Science 3550
108 Anderson Hall
M,W,F: 9am – 9:50am

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30p-2:30p, or by appointment.

Course Description

This course examines the nature and causes of poverty, the impact of public opinion and racial attitudes on poverty and welfare, the role of government officials in shaping anti-poverty and welfare reform policies, and welfare claiming as a form of political participation. The course evaluates the effectiveness of existing policies to combat poverty and whether proposed policies might be effective.

Course Objectives

This course has three primary learning objectives:

1. To introduce students to the political implications of poverty
2. To introduce students to the substantive and empirical study of poverty
3. To introduce students to the fundamentals of research design and analysis.

Course Material

The readings for this course are drawn primarily from journal articles and book chapters, all of which I have made available on Blackboard. The assigned readings appear in the “Content” tab on Blackboard, and are labeled to correspond with the topic of the week. I also encourage you to bring a physical or electronic copy of the readings to class, so that we can closely interrogate the assigned readings as a class.

Recommended

I do not require students to purchase texts for this course, but I do *recommend* the following in for students interested in the topic of poverty (1): *Poverty and Discrimination*, (2) *Handbook on Poverty and Inequality*, (3) *American Apartheid*, and (4) *The Truly Disadvantaged*.

Course Requirements

1. **Class Discussion (10 %):** This course will be conducted in a hybrid lecture-seminar format. This means that I will lecture, at least once a week, on issues related to research methods and issues of poverty. This will be followed by an in-class discussion of a set of readings devoted to a particular topic or a related set of topics. I expect students to fully participate and lead class discussions, so I will ask each of you, one week in advance, to volunteer to present one of the papers on our agenda for the next week.
2. **Briefing Memos (30%):** This assignment requires you to prepare six (6) briefing memos intended for policy makers who may need the information for making decisions. For example, you will be prompted to analyze and present survey data, frame a policy problem as it relates to poverty, and to analyze and recommend action on a local ordinance. The memo should be brief – i.e., no more than 2 pages, single spaced. This assignment is described on Blackboard.
3. **Exams (40%):** There will be two exams in this course. The exams will draw heavily from reading and lecture, so please be sure to make sure to keep up.
4. **Position Paper (20%):** I expect you to prepare a well-researched policy argument for a specific anti-poverty policy that you believe should or should not be enacted. Papers should take the form of a 5-page, single spaced document that is persuasive, purposeful, critical, credible, and authoritative. I will distribute a handout on this assignment closer to the deadline.

[**Note:** If you have difficulties using the library's resources, or with your library research, contact the **Political Science Librarian**, Rick Lezenby, by email (rlfile@temple.edu) or in his office (Room 315, 3rd floor, west side of Paley Library.)

Controversial Subject Matter. “Empiricism address what is, what might be in the future, and why.” In studying politics scientifically, our goal, then, is to think about empirical issues in a way that is objective and “value free.” Still, poverty is a problem worthy of national attention, and any discussion of poverty has the tendency to evoke strong reactions. This is par for the course in discussing social problems, and I am fully committed to offering a safe and respectful space in which to explore any issues that should emerge. Please keep your comments respectful.

Assignments. I do not accept late or emailed assignments. You are expected to submit a hardcopy (or on electronic copy on Blackboard) of your assignment on the day it is due. In the event that you are unable to meet a deadline or make an exam, you should speak with me in **ADVANCE** regarding the possibility of an accommodation. **Please be proactive and exercise professional courtesy.**

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

Mental and Physical Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the semester are encouraged to contact the Tuttleman Counseling Services (215-204-7276) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential. Moreover, if at any time during the semester issues come up that are affecting your classwork and class participation, please come talk to me ASAP so we can make the appropriate arrangements. It will be a lot easier for me and for you if we deal with the situation in a timely manner

READING AGENDA

The assigned readings for each week are listed just below the bolded date and topic. The readings here often feature dense arguments and complicated research designs. I do not expect you to understand the technical details of statistical tests and the like, but I would like you to understand the arguments, basic research approach (i.e, the data they collected). To help structure your approach to the assigned texts, consider the following questions:

1. What's the research question and why is it important?
2. What's the theoretical argument and does it help us understand the question better than before?
3. What evidence do the authors offer to support their theoretical claims and is that evidence credible?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study?

These dates are subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep track of these dates and any changes made to them.

1. Jan 11-15 Introduction

P&D, chapter 1

Stephen Lurie. "Why It Matters that Politicians Have No Experience of Poverty." *The Atlantic*. 2 June 2014.

Jeff Shesol. "The "P" Word: Why Presidents Stopped Talking About Poverty." *The New Yorker*. 9 January 2014.

Michael R. Sisak. "Poised to be next Philadelphia mayor, with a focus on poverty." *Associated Press*. 29 October 2015.

[Note: NO CLASS: FRIDAY & Monday, JANUARY 15&18thTH]

2 Jan. 18-22 Defining & Measuring Poverty

P&D, chapter 2

Blank, Rebecca. (2007). "Presidential Address: How to Improve Poverty Measurement in the United States." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. Volume 27: 2: 233-254.

Cordray, David S., and Georgine M. Pion. (1997). "What's Behind the Numbers? Definitional Issues in Counting the Homeless." In *Understanding Homelessness: New Policy and Research Perspectives*.

Jason DeParle et al. "Bleak Portrait of Poverty is Off the Mark, Experts Say," *New York Times*. 3 November 2011.

Rachel L. Swarns. "Bipartisan Call for New Federal Poverty Measure," *New York Times*, 1 September 2008.

[Memo 1: DC Area Drug Study: Homeless and Transient Population]

3 Jan. 25-29 Dynamics of Poverty

P&D, Chapter 4

Bane, Mary J, and David Ellwood. (1986). "Slipping in and Out of Poverty: The Dynamics of Spells." *Journal of Human Resources*.

Stevens, Ann H. (1994). "The Dynamics of Poverty Spells: Updating Bane and Elwood." *American Economic Review*.

Cellini, Stephanie Riegg, Signe-Mary McKernan, and Caroline Ratcliffe. (2008). "The Dynamics of Poverty in the United States: A Review of Data, Methods, and Findings." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 27: 577-605.

Erik Eckholm. "Recession Raises Poverty Rate to a 150-Year High." *The New York Times*. 16 September 2010.

Mark R. Rank. "Poverty in America is Mainstream." *The New York Times*. 2 November 2013.

[Briefing Memo 2: Poverty Profile]

4 Feb. 1-5 Poverty and Its Cause: A Debate

Murray, Charles. (1985). "Have the Poor Been "Losing Ground"?. *Political Science Quarterly* 100(3): 427-445. (Cultural Model)

Wilson, William J. (1992). "Have the Poor Been "Losing Ground"?. *Political Science Quarterly* 106(4): 639-656. (Underclass Model)

Patricia Cohen. "Culture of Poverty Makes a Comeback." *The New York Times*. 17 October 2010.

Eduardo Porter. "The Myth of Welfare's Corrupting Influence on the Poor." *The New York Times*. 20 October 2015.

5 Feb. 8-12 Labor Market Policies & Family Composition

P&D, chapter 5 & 6

Daniel Geary. "The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition." *The Atlantic*. 14 September 2015.

6 Feb 15-19 Evolution of Poverty Policy

P&D, Chapter 3

Gideon v. Wainwright, 372 U.S. 335 (1963).

Lemons, Jane Fullerton. (2015). "Fighting Urban Poverty: Is More Federal Aid Needed?" *CQ Researcher* 25: 602-624.

Moffit, Robert. (2003). "Four Decades of Antipoverty Policy: Past Developments and Future Directions." *Focus* 25(1).

Scholz, John Karl, Robert Moffitt, and Benjamin Cowan. 2008. "Trends in Income Support," *Focus*, 26:2 (Fall 2009): 43-49.

[Midterm]

7 Feb 22-26 Policy Analysis

Pennock, Andrew. (2011). "The Case for Using Policy Writing in Undergraduate Political Science Courses." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44: 141-146.

Mettler, Suzanne, and Joe Soss. (2004). "The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 2: 55-73.

Soss, Joe, and Sanford F. Schram. (2007). "A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback." *American Political Science Review* 101(1): 111-127.

Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. *Place Matters: Metropolitics for the 21st Century*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004. (Chapter 5)

Peter Edelman. "Poverty in America: Why Can't We End it?" *The New York Times*. 28 July 2012.

[Briefing Memo 3: Problem Analysis]

8 Fe 29-Ma 4 Spring Break

9* Mar. 7-11 Poverty, Politics, and Policy

P&D, chapter 8 & 9

Mean, Lawrence M. (2011). "Welfare Politics in Congress." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(2): 345-356.

Caraley, Demetrios J. (2001). "Ending Welfare As We Know It: A Reform Still in Progress." *Political Science Quarterly*: 116(4): 525-560.

Katzenstein, Mary F., and Maureen R. Waller. (2015). "Taxing the Poor: Incarceration, Poverty Governance, and the Seizure of Family Resources." *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (3): 638-656.

[No Class: Friday, March 11th]

10 Mar. 14-18 Attribution for Poverty

Iyengar, Shanto (1990). "Framing Responsibility for Political Issues: The Case of Poverty." *Political Behavior* 12:19-40.

Bullock, Heather. (1999). "Attributions for Poverty: A Comparison of Middle-Class and Welfare Recipient Attitudes." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 29: 2059-2082.

Cozzarelli, Catherine, Anna V. Wilkinson, and Michael Tagler. (2001). "Attitudes Toward the Poor and Attributions for Poverty." *Journal of Social Issues* 57(2): 207-227.

Newman, Benjamin, Christopher D. Johnston, and Patrick L. Lown. (2014). "False Consciousness or Class Awareness? Local Income Inequality, Personal Economic Position, and Belief in American Meritocracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 326-340.

[Briefing Memo 4: Social Class and Attitudes about Inequality]

11. Mar. 21-25 Race, Poverty and Public Opinion

Peffley, Mark, Jon Hurwitz, and Paul M. Sniderman. (1997). "Racial Stereotypes and Whites' Political Views of Blacks in the Context of Welfare and Crime." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1):30-60.

Gilens, Martin (1995). "Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare." *Journal of Politics*. 57(4): 994-1014.

Gilens, Marin (1996). "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the News Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60:515-527.

Gilens, Martin (1996). "Race Coding and White Opposition to Welfare." *American Political Science Review* 90(3): 593-604.

Matt Bai. "Race and Republican Attacks on Obama." *The New York Times*. 17 May 2011.

[Briefing Memo 5: Attitudes about Racial Discrimination and Racial Inequality in the U.S.]

12 Mar 29–Apr 1 Poverty & Discrimination: Housing

P&D, chapter 13

Massey, Douglas, and Nancy A. Denton. (1993). *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. (select chapters)

Jost, Kenneth. "Housing Discrimination: Should Government Do More to Reduce Residential Segregation?" *CQ Researcher* 25 (40): 937-960.

Cortright, Joe, and Dillon Mahmoudi. (2014). "Lost in Place: Why the persistence and spread of concentrated poverty – not gentrification – is our biggest urban challenge." *City Observers*.

Editorial Board. "How Segregation Destroys Black Wealth." *The New York Times*. 15 September 2015.

13. Apr. 4-8 Modified Monopoly

14. Apr. 11-15 Poverty & Discrimination: Labor Market

P&D, chapter 11

Pager, Devah. (2003). "The Mark of a Criminal." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

Kirschenman, Joleen, and Kathryn N. Neckerman. "'We'd Love to Hire Them, but...'" The Meaning of Race for Employers." In *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991.

[Briefing Memo 6: Ban the Box Ordinance]

15. Apr. 18-22 Poverty and Political Participation

Berry, Jeffrey M., Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson. "The Political Behavior of Poor People." In *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991.

Soss, Joe (2009). "The Place of Inequality: Non-participation in the American Polity." *Political Science Quarterly* 214(1): 95-126.

Soss, Joe. (1999). "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action." *American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 363-380.

Cohen, Cathy J., and Michael C. Dawson. "Neighborhood Poverty and African American Politics." *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 286-302.

16. Apr. 25th Last Day

