

COURSE OUTLINE

Soci401-01: The Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2014

TR 12:30 - 1:45 PM, in EDC284

University of Calgary - Department of Sociology

Instructor: Annette Tézli

Office: SS950

Phone: 403-220-6513 (during office hours only)

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Office hours: M 9:30 – 10:45 AM / T 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM / W 12:15-1:30 PM; and by appointment

Course Description

Despite economic prosperity and decades of research, poverty remains a persistent feature of even the most affluent societies, including Canada. Over the course of the semester, we will explore poverty as a social, political, human rights, and moral problem in contemporary Canadian society. Most of us are familiar with poverty, either through personal experience or exposure to public discourses and academic research. Consequently, most of us have specific images, ideas and understandings of poverty and the poor. It is those understandings that we will critically examine in this course using a sociological perspective.

We will begin our discussion with an examination of the poverty landscape in Canada followed by a discussion of the different ways of defining and measuring poverty, which shapes who is considered poor in our society in the first place. Employing a sociological framework, we will then critically discuss different theoretical approaches seeking to explain poverty. However, poverty in Canada is not randomly distributed, so we will explore which social groups are most vulnerable to experiencing poverty. We will consider the lived experience of those living in poverty as well as the consequences of poverty for society at large. We will conclude by exploring different measures to alleviate poverty in our society, both by various levels of government as well as different NGOs. We will engage with the subject matter through various group activities, class discussions, dialogue with guest speakers and written assignments.

This course will provide you the opportunity to:

- examine poverty through a sociological lens;
- retrieve, read and discuss a collection of sociological material pertaining to poverty;
- critically discuss issues pertaining to poverty drawing on different theoretical and methodological approaches;
- familiarize yourself with central research findings and common controversies related to poverty;
- critically discuss various perspectives on poverty and evaluate different programs and policies seeking to alleviate poverty;
- develop your writing skills through different informal and formal written assignments;
- be part of a class in which participation in discussions and group exercises is encouraged.

Course Format

I view class time as an opportunity for us to interactively engage with course material. I will enter each class period assuming that every student will be on time and has read all of the assigned texts. I will begin each class with a short lecture to cover key concepts and other pertinent information that will complement but not summarize the assigned readings. The remainder of the class will be interactive and devoted to hands-on exercises, group work, class discussions, and films. After each activity, we will reflect on insights gained through discussions and various formal and informal writing assignments.

Required Readings and Materials

(available through the UofC Bookstore)

Albanese, P. (2010). *Child poverty in Canada*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Sharma, R. D. (2012). *Poverty in Canada*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

One copy of each book is also available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library.

In addition to the two assigned books, a number of mandatory course readings (academic journal articles, government reports, etc.) are assigned for some classes. Additional readings are listed in the course schedule, and it is your responsibility to locate those readings through the UofC library where applicable.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

Please note that all assignments have to be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due.

	Date due	% of final grade
Attendance & participation		10
Leading a class discussion	varies	15
1 Critical response paper	varies	15
Research paper		
Paper proposal	October 9	10
Annotated bibliography	November 6	20
Final Paper	December 4	30

* Please note that I do **NOT** offer extra-credit or makeup options for this course.

Attendance & participation (10%)

Regular attendance and reading the assigned material, an open mind, and your active participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. I expect you to have done the assigned readings prior to the session in which they will be discussed, that you are an active participant in class discussions and group exercises, and that your contributions are generally informed by the assigned reading. If you cannot attend class, please email me prior to the class meeting for an excused absence as defined in the course policies.

Leading a class discussion (15%)

Each of you will participate in leading a class discussion once during the semester. You will be working in groups of 2 or 3. I will assign groups randomly using the D2L group formation tool after the class drop deadline. Each group will then be randomly assigned a class for which to prepare questions for a 15-minute discussion. Your responsibilities for that class are to do the reading very closely, and to come up with provocative questions, critiques, and issues *based on the reading* for the class to discuss. This IS NOT a formal presentation of reading material to the class, but you can prepare an outline to hand out to the class or be creative in some way if you wish. Preparing the discussion is a group effort and you will be evaluated as a group. In addition, each participant will be evaluated individually for their contribution to the discussion. More details will be provided in class and on D2L.

1 Critical response paper (15%)

In your critical response paper, which should be 3-5 pages long, you will engage with the assigned reading in more depth. Here you should respond to the ideas presented in the assigned reading critically and in an evaluative manner. While it is entirely up to you to choose the readings to which you would like to respond, I suggest you write the critical response for the day you have been assigned as the discussant to help you prepare your discussion contribution. More details will be provided in class and on D2L.

Research paper (50% total)

1. Paper proposal – 1 page (10%)

Before you can write a research paper, you have to decide on a research question. For this assignment, I ask you to develop a central question you are trying to find the answer to by examining existing academic, empirical literature. You may choose one of the topics provided on D2L or (ideally) develop your own. You can select any topic that interests you, but keep in mind that it must relate to poverty and that you have to examine your topic sociologically. Your question should be as precise as possible to ensure that you will be able to answer it in the context of your research paper. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and on D2L.

2. Annotated Bibliography – length will vary (20%)

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to summarize and evaluate sources of information for your research paper. Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise writing, succinct analysis, and informed library research. For this assignment, select, summarize and analyze 10 academic, peer-reviewed journal articles presenting unique empirical research relevant for your research question. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and on D2L.

3. Research Paper – 10-12 pages (30%)

Instead of writing a final exam, you will write a final paper, which will allow you to explore a topic of your choosing in more depth and thereby strengthen your understanding of that topic. Your paper will be a survey paper, meaning you should answer a research question by critically reviewing, synthesizing, and analyzing relevant academic, empirical literature, and providing data and research evidence that documents at least two sides of the issue under discussion. More detailed instructions will be provided in class and on D2L.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

A+	96 – 100%	B+	80 – 84%	C+	67 – 69%	D+	55 – 58%
A	90 – 95%	B	75 – 79%	C	63 – 66%	D	50 – 54%
A-	85 – 89%	B-	70 – 74%	C-	59 – 62%	F	< 50 %

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

Emergency evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Social Science - Food Court.

Course Policies

Technology Use

You are welcome to use your laptop/tablet in class. If you are using a laptop/tablet in class, I would kindly ask you to sit in the back of the class so that other students are not distracted. Please use your laptop/tablet for course-related purposes only (i.e. to access course presentations, take notes). Bear in mind that using your computer/tablet/phone to surf the net, shop, email, check Facebook, update your tweets, etc. is distracting to your classmates. It is also a waste of your tuition fees. Permission to use laptops/tablets may be withdrawn if they are not used appropriately. Please mute your cell phone and refrain from using it during class.

Attendance

I expect you to be on time so that other students in the class are not interrupted by your late arrival. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course. If you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the covered material from one of your class mates.

Participation

Reading the assigned material, an open mind, and your active participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. I expect you to have done the assigned readings prior to the session in which they will be discussed and that your contributions to class discussions are informed by the required reading.

E-mail

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line. Also, it is courteous to include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails violating customary email conventions will be ignored. All other emails will be answered within one business day. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

Assignments and Deferrals

It is your responsibility to complete and submit all assignments outlined in this course outline. If at all possible you must provide **advance** notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment on time. All requests for a deferral of an exam or assignment due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while you have the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. **Travel arrangements, misreading of the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment responsibilities** are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. There are absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS.

Assignments submitted late (as of the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the assignment schedule) without due cause are subject to a **5 percentage points deduction** (i.e. 80% instead of 85%) for **each day** past the due date. Assignments not submitted within 7 calendar days of the due date without approval for extension will automatically receive a grade of 0.

Deferred Term Work Form:

Please note that requests to defer a final paper are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

http://wcm.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork.pdf

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor. Electronic submissions via email or Blackboard, papers placed under the instructor's door, or those submitted to the administrative assistants in the department's main office will **NOT** be accepted.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for

pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.

3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

Ethics Research

Please be advised that any research involving human subjects - including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, you must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing your plans with me, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Please be advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation

...disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department's main office. I will return written assignments individually during class, or during my office hours. If you are unable to pick up your assignment, you may provide me with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of your assignment.

Student Representation

The 2014-15 Students' Union VP Academic is Hana Kadri; email: suypaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>

Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. You can also contact Campus Security from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students who require academic accommodation, must register with Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Disability Resource Centre) at MC 452 (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/> or phone 403-220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with Student Accessibility Services and to request academic accommodation, if required.

Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals

If you chose to challenge a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the UofC Calendar for more information and follow the procedures outlined therein.

Course Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced and discussed in class.

The following questions should guide your reading of course material and will help you prepare for class discussions: What are the author's main arguments? What new concepts/ideas/arguments does the author introduce? How do these readings relate to my learning in previous courses and to what I experience as a member of this society? How am I reacting to these findings/arguments? Do they support or challenge my values, beliefs, knowledge? Why and how? How would I respond to the author's arguments? What questions remain unanswered? What is confusing/difficult to understand or brilliant about this reading?

Week 1 - Introduction

September 9 – Introduction

September 11 – Poverty in Canada: An Overview

Required reading: Duffy & Mandell (2010)

Week 2 – Defining & Measuring Poverty

September 16 – Defining Poverty

Required reading: Guppy & Hakshaw (2009), Sarlo (2008)

September 18 – Measuring Poverty

Required reading: Ross, Scott, & Smith (2000)

Week 3 – Explaining Poverty: Academic Discourses

September 23 – Theoretical Approaches

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch.1), Albanese (2010, Ch.5&6)

September 25 – The Shortcomings of Academic Poverty Research

Required reading: Novac (1995), Beresford & Croft (1995)

Week 4 – Explaining Poverty: Public and Political Discourses

September 30 – Public Perceptions

Required reading: Reutter et al. (2006)

October 2 – Political Discourses

Required reading: Chunn & Gavigan (2004)

Week 5 – Demographic Characteristics: Who are the Most Vulnerable?

October 7– Location Matters

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 7), Albanese (2010, Ch. 4)

October 9 – The Racialization of Poverty

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 2)

Paper proposal due

Week 6 – Demographic Characteristics: Who are the Most Vulnerable?

October 14 – Family Adversity and The Feminization of Poverty

Required reading: Sharma (2012,Ch. 4)

October 16 – Child Poverty

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 5), Albanese (2010, Ch. 2)

Week 7 – Demographic Characteristics: Who are the Most Vulnerable?

October 21 – The Elderly

Required reading: Sharma (2012,Ch. 3)

October 23 – When Work is Not Enough: The Working Poor

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 6)

Week 8 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty (include discussion of societal costs)

October 28 – The Stigma of Living in Poverty

Required reading: McIntyre, Officer & Robinson (2003), Reutter et al. (2009)

October 30 – Food and Transportation Insecurities

Required reading: Tarasuk, Mitchell & Dachner (2013), Riches (2002)

Week 9 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty

November 4 – Accessing Education and Health Care

Required reading: Albanese (2010, Ch. 3), Johnson (2009)

November 6 – Housing Insecurities

Required reading: City of Calgary (2008), Fallis (2010)

Annotated bibliography due: beginning of class

Week 10 – Responses to Poverty: The Federal Government

November 11 – Reading Break, NO CLASS

November 13 – The Canadian Welfare State

Required reading: Lightman & Riches (2000), LeRoy & Clemens (2003)

Week 11 – Responses to Poverty: The Provincial Government

November 18 – British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta

Required Reading: Little & Marks (2006), Boessenkool (2003)

November 20 – Alberta Works

Required Reading: Gazo (2007), Mason (2003)

Week 12 - Responses to Poverty: NGOs

November 25 – The Living Wage Campaign: Vibrant Communities Calgary

Required reading: <http://www.vibrantcalgary.com/>

November 27 – Reducing Poverty: Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative

Required reading: <http://www.enoughforall.ca/>

Week 13 – Conclusion

December 2 – Ending Poverty as a Social Justice Issue

Required reading: Albanese (2010, Ch. 8)

December 4 – Final class discussion

Final paper due: beginning of class