

COURSE OUTLINE

Soci401.43-01: The Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2015

TR 9:30 - 10:45 PM, in CHF 214 (Craigie Hall, Block F)

University of Calgary - Department of Sociology

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézli

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Email: atezli@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: MWF 12:30-1:30 PM; and by appointment

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

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 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.

Required Readings

(available through the UofC Bookstore)

Required:

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

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

Recommended:

Yellin, L.L. (2009). *A Sociology Writer's Guide*. Boston: Pearson.

Available as e-book: <http://www.coursesmart.com/a-sociology-writer-guide/linda-l-yellin/dp/9780205646241>

A copy of each book is also available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library (TFDL).

In addition to the two required 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 the link will be provided on D2L.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

Please note that all assignments have to be submitted at the beginning of class (9:30am sharp) on the day they are due. Papers submitted past 9:30am are subject to late penalties.

	Date due	% of final grade
Attendance & participation		10
3 exercise reflection papers		
Critical film response	October 15	10
Transportation challenge	November 3	20
Welfare challenge	November 26	25
Service Provider Profile	December 8	35

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.

For each class you will be asked to submit one discussion question based on the assigned readings. Full credit will be given to questions that sincerely engage with the readings. Please submit your discussion question by 4 PM the day before our class meeting time (i.e. by 4:00 PM Mondays and Wednesdays) via D2L Dropbox. Late questions will not be accepted. We will then discuss a selection of the submitted questions in class.

3 short exercise reflection papers (45% total; 10, 20, 25% respectively)

Throughout the semester we will engage in various exercises and group activities. You will write a short, 3-4-page reflection paper on three of these exercises, which will give you the opportunity to connect your personal observations to course material. Detailed information will be provided in class and on D2L. Please refer to the assignment schedule for respective due dates.

Service Provider Profile (35%)

In your final paper, which should be no longer than 8 pages, you will combine class readings and independent research. For this paper, you will research a specific organization in Calgary, which through its services seeks to ameliorate poverty in the city. You will describe the organization's target population, service access and accessibility, service approach and effectiveness. In addition to your paper, you will summarize key points of your discussion in an infographic and upload it to a poverty-related information portal. Detailed paper guidelines and the link to a free infographic tool 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 Professional Faculties - 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 D2L, 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 Stephan Guscott; 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 seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services ; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

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: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>.

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 8 – Introduction

September 10 – Poverty in Canada: An Overview

Required reading: Duffy & Mandell (2010)

Week 2 – Defining & Measuring Poverty

September 15 – Defining Poverty

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

September 17 – Measuring Poverty

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

Week 3 – Explaining Poverty: Academic Discourses

September 22 – Theoretical Approaches

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

September 24 – The Shortcomings of Academic Poverty Research

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

Week 4 – Explaining Poverty: Public and Political Discourses

September 29 – Public Perceptions

Required reading: Reutter et al. (2006)

October 1 – Political Discourses

Required reading: Chunn & Gavigan (2004)

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

October 6– Location Matters

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

October 8 – The Racialization of Poverty

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 2)

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

October 13 – Family Adversity and The Feminization of Poverty

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 4)

October 15 – Child Poverty

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

Critical film response due

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

October 20 – The Elderly

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 3)

October 22 – When Work is Not Enough: The Working Poor

Required reading: Sharma (2012, Ch. 6)

Week 8 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty

October 27 – The Stigma of Living in Poverty

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

October 29 – Food and Transportation Insecurities

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

Week 9 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty

November 3 – Accessing Education and Health Care

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

Transportation challenge reflection due

November 5 – Housing Insecurities

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

Week 10 – Responses to Poverty: The Federal Government

November 10 – The Canadian Welfare State

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

November 12 – Reading Break, NO CLASS

Week 11 – Responses to Poverty: The Provincial Government

November 17 – British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta

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

November 19 – Welfare Challenge (exercise)

Week 12 - Responses to Poverty: The Alberta Government and NGOs

November 24 – Alberta Works

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

November 26 – Reducing Poverty: Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative

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

Welfare challenge reflection due

Week 13 – Responses to Poverty: NGOs, cont.

December 1 – The Living Wage Campaign: Vibrant Communities Calgary

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

December 3 – Ending Poverty as a Social Justice Issue

Required reading: Albanese (2010, Ch. 8)

Week 13 – Conclusion

December 8 – Final class discussion

Final paper due