



FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Soci401.43-01

Sociology of Poverty

Fall 2017

TR 14:00 - 15:15, in SA119 (Science A)

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézli

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Office hours: Mondays 10:00 – 11:30,

Thursdays 11:00 – 13:00 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 those affected by poverty. 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.

Upon completion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- retrieve, effectively read, discuss and apply a collection of sociological material pertaining to poverty;
- summarize central research findings and common controversies related to poverty;
- critically discuss issues pertaining to poverty drawing on different theoretical and methodological approaches;
- critically discuss various perspectives on poverty and evaluate different programs and policies seeking to alleviate poverty;
- communicate effectively in writing;
- independently develop research questions and devise a research program to answer those questions.

Course Format

Please note that this an upper-level course which will be reading and writing intensive. 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 guest speakers, hands-on exercises, group work, class discussions, and films.

Required Texts

A textbook or course pack is not required for this course. Required course readings are listed in the course schedule in the back of the syllabus. A complete list of assigned readings is provided on D2L.

Recommended Texts

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

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

Please note that all assignments have to be submitted at the beginning of class (14:00 sharp) on the day they are due. Assignments submitted past 14:00 are subject to late penalties.

	Date due	% of final grade
Fundraiser report	October 19	20
Transportation challenge	November 23	20
Research report		
Research topic proposal	September 28	15
Infographic	November 7	20
Research paper	December 7	25

Fundraiser report (20%)

Many non-profit organizations rely not only on government funding, but monetary donations from individuals and corporations to provide vital services to individuals and families experiencing poverty. However, due to the current economic downturn, many such organizations in Calgary are facing serious financial challenges as monetary donations are dwindling. This semester, we will partner with the **Calgary Dream Centre** which supports vulnerable individuals in their journey of recovering from various addictions. We will participate in their second annual **Toonies for Turkeys** fundraiser, the proceeds of which will go towards providing a nourishing Thanksgiving dinner to Calgarians experiencing financial and housing challenges. We will form small groups at the beginning of the semester and each group will devise and implement its own fundraising strategy. I will dedicate some class time each week to the project so that teams can connect in person in class. At the end of the project, you will produce a fundraiser report, which includes individual reflections on your experience, a collaborative summary of your fundraising strategy, and a peer evaluation. More details will be provided in class and on D2L.

Transportation challenge (20%)

This exercise is designed for you to experience what it means to rely solely on public transit for transportation, like many Calgarians living in poverty. For this exercise, use only public transit as a means of transportation for seven consecutive days. Whether you are heading to university, work, social outings, family functions, the mall or the grocery store, leave your car at home and hop on the train and/or the bus instead. You can start at any time in the semester, just make sure you give yourself enough time to write up your results. Note that your fees pay for your transit pass, so make sure to pick up your transit sticker if you have not already done so. You will then write a short, 5-page reflection paper, which will give you the opportunity to connect your observations to the academic literature. More details will be provided in class and on D2L.

Research Paper (60%)

Research topic proposal (15%)

Before you can write a research paper, you have to decide on a topic and specific research question. In your topic proposal you will identify one issue pertaining to poverty that you would like to investigate in more depth throughout the semester. You can select any topic that interests you, but keep in mind that you have to examine your topic sociologically. Please explain your topic, telling me why this topic interests you and briefly outlining its sociological relevance. Secondly, what is/are your research question(s)? Research questions should logically flow out of your chosen topic. You should provide a list of 10 peer-reviewed, academic research articles in your area of investigation as well as an annotated bibliography of 5 of those article. More detailed guidelines and additional resources will be provided in class and on D2L.

Infographic (20%)

To help you stay on track and structure your research paper, your will summarize preliminary key points of your discussion in an infographic. You will then present your infographic to your assigned team of classmates, who will provide you with constructive feedback. You will be evaluated on your infographic, a peer evaluation of your presentation and the feedback you provide to your peers. Detailed guidelines and the link to free infographic tools will be provided in class and on D2L.

Research paper (25%)

Your final research paper will be based on the existing empirical literature pertaining to your chosen topic under investigation, reflect the complexity of the discussion, and should be no longer than 10 pages. More information and relevant resources will be provided on D2L.

Grading Scale

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

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	Unsatisfactory performance

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 Sciences - 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 and Participation

Regular attendance and reading the assigned material, an open mind, as well as your active and meaningful 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 critically read the assigned texts 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. 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 and it is your responsibility to obtain the covered material from one of your class mates. If you come late or need to leave class early, it is courteous to sit somewhere that will allow you to settle down or leave without disrupting others.

E-mail

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please send emails through D2L or from your ucalgary account. I will not answer any emails sent from personal email accounts. 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 is available here:

https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

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

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available 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

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:
(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>).

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 2017-18 Students' Union VP Academic is Tina Miller (suvpaca@ucalgary.ca). For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>.

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

The student accommodation policy can be found at:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy>.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals

If you chose to contest 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>.

Thrive Priority Support Network

Your academic success and personal well-being is important to me. Please feel free to contact me at any time you need academic or personal support and I will help you identify the appropriate resources. Please note that I am working closely with the Thrive Priority Support Network, which seeks to identify students who are facing academic challenges and provide appropriate support services early. This tool monitors this course's D2L gradebook for sudden changes in a student's academic performance and alerts academic development specialists, who will then reach out to the student to touch base. Engagement with the academic development specialist is entirely voluntary and all information is confidential. More information is provided here:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/advising/thrive>

Course Schedule

The following questions should guide your reading of course material: 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? How & why do they support or challenge my values, beliefs, knowledge? 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: Defining and Measuring Poverty

September 12 – Defining Poverty

Assigned reading: Guppy and Hakshaw (2009), Kwadzo (2015)

September 14 – Measuring Poverty

Assigned reading: Ross, Scott, and Smith (2000), Sarlo (2008)

Week 2 – Explaining Poverty

September 19 – Explaining Poverty

Assigned reading: Johnson and Mason (2012), Novac (1995)

September 21 – StrengthsQuest workshop (attendance mandatory)

Assigned reading: complete survey – link posted on D2L

Week 3 – Public Perceptions

September 26 – Public Discourses

Assigned reading: Lepianka, van Oorschot, and Gelissen (2009), Reutter et al. (2006)

September 28 – Calgary Dream Centre guest lecture (attendance mandatory)

Research topic proposal due

Week 4 – Public Perceptions

October 3 – Political Discourses

Assigned reading: Chunn and Gavigan (2004) , Beresford and Croft (1995)

October 5 – Toonie for Turkeys radio-thon

Week 5 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty

October 10 – Stigma

Assigned reading: McIntyre, Officer and Robinson (2003), Reutter et al. (2009)

October 12 – Food & Nutrition

Assigned reading: Tarasuk, Mitchell and Dachner (2016), Food Banks Canada (2016)

Week 6 – The Consequences of Living in Poverty

October 17 – Transportation

Assigned reading: Sanchez (2008), Turner and Grieco (2000)

October 19 – Education and Health

Assigned reading: Albanese (2010, Ch. 3), Spinney and Millward (2010)

Fundraiser report due

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

October 24 – Location

Assigned reading: Chokie and Partridge (2008), Walks and Bourne (2006)

October 26 – The Racialization of Poverty

Assigned reading: National Council of Welfare (2012), Wilson and Macdonald (2010)

Week 8 – Demographic Characteristics: Who are the Most Vulnerable?

October 31 – Family Adversity and the Feminization of Poverty

Assigned reading: Evans (2010), Nelson (2004)

November 2 – Children and the Elderly

Assigned reading: Crossley and Curtis (2006), Pagani (2007), Gazso (2005)

Week 9 – Demographic Characteristics: Who are the Most Vulnerable?

November 7 – Infographic presentations

Infographic due

November 9 – When Work is Not Enough: The Working Poor

Assigned reading: Zuberi and Ptashnick (2012), Mason (2012)

Week 10 – Responses to Poverty: The Federal Government

November 14 – The Canadian Welfare State

Assigned reading: Lightman and Riches (2000), LeRoy and Clemens (2003)

November 16 – Housing

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

Week 11 – Responses to Poverty: Provincial Governments

November 21 – British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta

Assigned reading: Little and Marks (2006), Gazo (2007)

November 23 – Welfare Challenge (exercise – meet in Arts lab SS018)

Assigned reading: Breitzkreuz (2005)

Transportation challenge due

Week 12 - Responses to Poverty: Non-Profit Sector

November 28 – Food Banks

Assigned reading: Tarasuk (2001), Riches (2002)

November 30 – Reducing Poverty: Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative

Assigned reading: <http://www.enoughforall.ca/>; <http://www.vibrantcalgary.com/>

Week 13 – Conclusion

December 5 – Ending Poverty as a Social Justice Issue

Assigned reading: Albanese (2010, Ch. 8), Howlett (2006)

December 7 – Final Class Discussion

Research paper due