

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**Soci401-01: The Sociology of Homelessness**  
Winter 2015  
TR 9:30 - 10:45 AM, in SS012  
University of Calgary - Department of Sociology

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézli  
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Office hours: M/T/F 11:00-12:30 PM; and by appointment

**Course Description**

Despite economic prosperity and decades of research, extreme poverty and homelessness remain persistent features of even the most affluent societies, including Canada. The city of Calgary, for example, is marked by great wealth and yet has to contend with a sizeable homeless population. Over the course of the semester, we will explore homelessness as a social, political, human rights, and moral issue in Canadian society. Most of us have little personal experience of or exposure to homelessness and much of our knowledge is derived from media representations, public discourses and perhaps academic research. Consequently, most of us have specific images, ideas and understandings of homelessness and “the homeless”. Those understandings we will critically examine in this course using a sociological perspective.

We will begin our discussion with an examination of the prevalence of homelessness in contemporary Canadian society followed by a discussion of the different ways of defining and measuring homelessness, which shapes who is considered homeless in our society in the first place. Employing a sociological framework, we will then critically discuss different theoretical approaches seeking to explain homelessness. However, just like poverty, homelessness in Canada is not randomly distributed, so we will explore which social groups are most vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. We will consider the lived experience of those affected by homelessness as well as the consequences of homelessness for the individual and society at large. We will conclude by exploring different measures to alleviate homelessness 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. In addition, you are required to engage in community service regularly throughout the semester.

This course will provide you the opportunity to:

- examine homelessness through a sociological lens,
- retrieve, read and discuss a collection of empirical research pertaining to homelessness,
- critically discuss issues pertaining to homelessness drawing on different theoretical and methodological approaches,
- familiarize yourself with central research findings and common controversies related to homelessness,
- critically discuss various perspectives homelessness and evaluate different programs and policies seeking to alleviate homelessness,
- 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, and
- contribute to the community in which you live in a meaningful way.

## 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

All readings 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 (9:30 am) on the day they are due. Any papers submitted thereafter will be considered late and penalties will apply.

Assessments		Date due	% of final grade
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Awareness</b>		
Standpoint reflection		January 27	5
Reading summary		varies	10
	Research topic proposal	February 10	10
	Research paper	March 17	30
	Poster presentation	April 9	10
Volunteer reflection		April 14	30
Attendance & participation			5

Assignments for this course will revolve around two core semester-long projects: your own knowledge gain and your contribution to raising public awareness for issues pertaining to homelessness. However, the two cannot be neatly separated as you must first learn about social issues yourself before you can educate others. Working on two projects simultaneously requires a high level of organization and time management on your part, valuable skills to have when entering the labor force.

### **Knowledge (50% total)**

The first project focuses on your own learning about issues pertaining to homelessness.

#### *Attendance & participation (5%)*

Regular attendance and reading the assigned material, an open mind, and your active participation are required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. I expect that 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.

#### *Standpoint reflection (5%)*

This short 2-3 page reflection paper is based on an in-class exercise. The goal of this exercise is to help you reflect on who you are and how that shapes what you know. We need to be reflexive so that we are fully aware of our own position in the social world and how that position shapes our beliefs, values, experiences, opportunities and constraints.

### *Reading summaries (10%)*

I have assigned 2 readings for each class. I expect all of you to have read at least 1 of the 2 readings each class. Each of you will prepare a reading summary during the semester. To accommodate all students, you will be working in teams of 2. I will assign teams 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 a reading summary. Your team's task is to summarize the key information provided in your assigned text in a brief, 10-minute presentation. Further, you will develop one discussion question that will start off our class discussion for that day. More detailed information will be provided in class and on D2L.

### *Volunteer reflection (30%)*

This course will explore the issue of homelessness through a service-learning component. All students are required to complete at least 3 3-hour service engagements in the community over the course of the semester. I will accompany you to the first engagement and you will complete the remaining two engagements independently in small groups. The volunteer engagements require outside class time as all community service will take place in the evening. I will provide specific volunteer opportunities at various community sites, time slots and detailed information during the first week of class and on D2L. You can sign up for different service option on a first-come-first-served basis after the course drop deadline.

In your final paper, which should be no longer than 8 pages, you will reflect on your experience volunteering and what you have learned about homelessness throughout the semester. I ask that you take notes after each service engagement, reflecting on your insights and linking them back to course material. To make sure your notes stay on track, please refer to the detailed paper guidelines provided on D2L.

### **Awareness (50% total)**

The Canada Revenue Agency ruled that charities may not use more than 10% of their funding towards political activities. Moreover, in 2006, the federal government modified the function of Status of Women Canada, removing advocacy from its official mandate and no longer providing funding for organizations and their advocacy work. This change severely undermined the ability of organizations in the homeless sector to work towards social change. For this project we will work together as a class to raise awareness for issues pertaining to homelessness. To that end, we will collectively work on a poster presentation that we will display publicly on campus for one day at the end of the semester. We will seek out funding to pay for materials, organize a venue to display our posters, collaborate with campus organizations, and advertise our display. In addition, you will each individually contribute to the overall project as discussed below.

### *Research topic proposal (10%)*

First, we have to decide what information will be included in the poster display. Each of you will be in charge of one particular aspect of homelessness, which will give you the opportunity to pursue a topic of special interest to you in more depth. In your topic proposal you will identify one issue pertaining to homelessness that you would like to investigate in more depth throughout the semester and provide a list of 10 research articles in your area of investigation. More detailed information will be provided in class and on D2L.

### *Research paper (30%)*

In your research paper you will generate the information you would like to display on your poster. This information should be based on the existing empirical literature and should provide a good overview of the different perspectives in the area. Papers should be no longer than 8 pages. More information will be provided on D2L.

### *Poster presentation (10%)*

We will present our poster to the UofC community on Thursday, April 9. You will be evaluated on the quality of the substantive content of your poster and your presentation of its content to me and the public. Your grade will also reflect your overall contribution to the realization of this project. More detailed grading criteria 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](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 Hana Kadri; email: [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca). The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca), [arts2@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@ucalgary.ca), [arts3@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@ucalgary.ca), and [arts4@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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 (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>) 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**

January 13 – Introduction

Required reading: Scott and Sturk (2000)

January 15 – Homelessness in Canada: An Overview

Required reading: Peressini (2009), Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter & Gulliver (2013)

### **Week 2 – Defining, Measuring & Explaining Homelessness**

January 20 – Defining & Measuring Homelessness

Required reading: Echenberg & Jensen (2008), Peressini, McDonald & Hulchanski (2009)

January 22 – Pathways Into Homelessness

Required reading: Main (1998), Morrell-Bellai, Goering & Boydell (2000)

### **Week 3 – Homelessness as a Social Problem**

January 27 – Social Problem Constructions

Required reading: Stern (1984), Pomeroy (2005)

Paper due: Standpoint Reflection

January 29 – Social Problem Constructions

Required reading: Remillard & Schneider (2012), Boydell, Goering & Morell-Ballai (2000)

### **Week 4 – Homeless Populations: Unattached Individuals & Seniors**

February 3 – Physical Health & Disabilities

Required reading: Frankish, Hwang & Quantz (2009), Street Health Report 2007 (2009)

February 5 – Survival Strategies & Victimization

Required reading: Klodawasky (2006), Wenzel, Koegel & Gelberg (2000)

### **Week 5 – Homeless Populations: Mental Health & Addictions**

February 10 – Mental Health

Required reading: CPHI (2009), Snow, Baker, Anderson & Martin (1986)

Paper due: Research Topic Proposal

February 12 – Addictions & Dual Diagnosis

Required reading: Strehlau, Torchalla, Li, Shuetz & Krausz (2012), Fisher & Breakey (1991)

### **Week 6 – (February 16-20) READING BREAK, NO CLASS**

### **Week 7 – Homeless Populations: Families**

February 24 – Parenting While Homeless

Required reading: Cosgrove & Flynn (2005), Schindler & Coley (2007)

February 26 – Impact on Children

Required reading: Schinn et al. (2008), Barrow & Lawinski (2009)

### **Week 8 – Homeless Populations: Youth**

March 3 – Pathways and Exits

Required reading: Chau & Galiuk (2009), Karabanow (2009)

March 5 – Select Challenges

Required reading: Gaetz (2009), May (2014)

### **Week 9 – Homeless Populations: Immigrants and Indigenous Peoples**

March 10 – Immigrants & Indigenous Peoples

Required reading: Hiebert, D’Addario, Sherrell (2009), Kingfisher (2007)

March 12 – Indigenous Peoples

Required reading: Culhane (2003), Menzies (2009)

### **Week 10 – Responses to Homelessness: Governments**

March 17 – Canadian Housing Policies

Required reading: Fallis (2010), Gaetz (2010)

Paper due: Research Paper

March 19 – Calgary Committee to End Homelessness

Required reading: *Calgary’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness*, McLean (2008)

### **Week 11 – Responses to Homelessness: Governments**

March 24 – Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness

Required Reading: *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*

March 26 – The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

Required Reading: *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in 10 Years*

### **Week 12 - Responses to Homelessness: The Shelter System**

March 31 – The Shelter System

Required reading: Hurtubise, Babin & Grimard (2009), Hoffman & Coffey (2008)

April 2 – Service Provision

Required reading: Armaline (2005), Sager & Stephens (2005)

### **Week 13 – Contributing to Change Through Awareness Raising**

April 7 – Poster preparation (in-class)

April 9 – Poster presentation (all day)

### **Week 14 – Conclusion**

April 14 – Ending Homelessness as a Social Justice Issue

Paper due: Volunteer Reflection