



FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Soci401.44 L03

Sociology of Homelessness

Winter 2018

TR 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM, in ES054 (Earth Sciences)

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézi

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Office hours: Mondays 3:00 – 4:30 PM,
Wednesdays 9:30 – 11:30 AM; 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. 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 social justice 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”. We will critically examine those understandings 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, 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 experiences 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 expected to engage in community service regularly throughout the semester.

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

- examine homelessness through a sociological lens,
- retrieve, read and discuss a collection of empirical research pertaining to homelessness,
- summarize central research findings and common controversies related to homelessness,
- critically discuss diverging explanations of homelessness,
- evaluate competing programs and policies seeking to alleviate homelessness,
- communicate effectively in writing,
- contribute to their community in a meaningful way,
- independently develop research questions and devise a research program to answer those questions, and
- educate others about homelessness.

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

A list of all required readings is provided on D2L.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

Please note that all assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class (11:00 AM sharp) on the day they are due. Any papers submitted thereafter without due cause as defined in the course outline will be considered late and respective deductions will apply.

Assessments		Date due	% of final grade
Knowledge/Skills	Raising Awareness		
3 Critical reading reflections			15
Section I		February 1	
Section II		March 15	
Section III		April 5	
3 Volunteer reflections		varies	35
	Research topic proposal	February 27	10
	Poster presentation	March 29	15
	Research paper	April 12	25

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/Skills (50% total)

Critical reading reflections (5% each, total 15%)

Studies repeatedly show that students will not complete their readings unless there is some form of extrinsic motivator attached. However, completing the assigned readings prior to class will greatly facilitate your learning of the material. Completing the assigned readings also allows you to process some of the material prior to class and thus contribute meaningfully to group and class discussions. The courses is divided into 3 core sections. At the end of each section, you will write a brief (3-4 pages) reflection on the readings assigned for the respective section. I will provide detailed feedback on each reflection and expect you to incorporate that feedback into subsequent submission. Papers have to be submitted via D2L dropbox. Please refer to the detailed assignment guidelines and writing resources provided on D2L.

3 Volunteer reflection (35% - 5%, 10%, and 20% respectively)

This course will explore the issue of homelessness through a service-learning component. All students are required to complete at least three 3-hour service engagements in the community over the course of the semester. The volunteer engagements require outside class time as all community service will take place in the evening and on weekends. I arranged different volunteer opportunities with various service providers, such as the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre, The Mustard Seed, Alpha House, the Calgary Dream Centre and CUPS. Time slots and a detailed description of each service provider is posted on D2L. You can sign up for all volunteer engagements on a first-come-first-served basis after our first class on Tuesday, January 9.

After each volunteer engagement, you will reflect on your experience volunteering and insights gained. Then you will link your reflection to what you have learned about homelessness up to that point in the semester by drawing on assigned course material and additional sources. The critical reading reflections should be helpful in that regard. I will provide detailed feedback on each reflection and expect you to incorporate that feedback into subsequent submission. The goal of this sequenced writing is to strengthen your analytic and writing skills throughout the semester. Reflection papers should be no longer than 4 pages. Papers have to be submitted within one week of the volunteer engagement (midnight) via D2L dropbox. Please refer to the detailed assignment guidelines and writing resources provided on D2L.

Raising Awareness (50% total)

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 and additional resources will be provided in class and on D2L.

Poster presentation (15%)

The Conference Board of Canada identified being able to work with others, participating in projects and tasks and adaptability as key employability skills. To develop these skills further, you will work in groups of 2 to prepare an informative poster summarizing your research findings. We will present our posters to the UofC community on Friday, March 29. 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 and resources will be provided in class and on D2L.

Research paper (25%)

Your research paper you will be based on the existing empirical literature pertaining to your chosen topic under investigation 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 ICT – 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). 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. Lectures will build on, but not summarize the assigned reading. 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 material. I expect you to be on time so that other students in the class are not interrupted by your late arrival. During lectures, please make sure not to distract your fellow students in any way. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course and it is your responsibility to obtain notes from one of your class mates. If you come late or need to leave class early, please sit somewhere you can settle down or leave without disrupting others.

E-mail

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. I will not answer emails violating the outlined email conventions. All other emails will be answered within one business day, but I do not answer emails over the weekend. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline and the D2L discussion board first. Please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Questions about the course content and readings should be posed on D2L; 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 submit an assignment on time. All deferral requests 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, time mismanagement, 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 the final assignment 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. 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

Students are 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 Departmental 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 (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>) and follow the procedures outlined therein.

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

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?

I. Definitions, Measurements, Academic Explanations, and Public Discourses

Week 1

Tuesday, January 9: Homelessness in Canada

Reading: Scott and Sturk (2000) & Gaetz et al. (2016), part 1&2

Thursday, January 11: Researching "the Homeless"

Reading: Runnels et al. (2009) & Taylor (2008)

Week 2

Tuesday, January 16: Defining & Measuring Homelessness

Reading: Echenberg and Jensen (2008) & Peressini, McDonald, and Hulchanski (2010)

Thursday, January 18: Explaining Homelessness

Reading: Morrell-Bellai, Goering, and Boydell (2000) & Thistle (2017)

Week 3

Tuesday, January 23: Academic Social Problem Constructions

Reading: Cronley (2010) & Wright (1993)

Thursday, January 25: Political and Mediated Discourses

Reading: Kingfisher (2007) & Remillard and Schneider (2012)

II. Select Populations and their Lived Experiences

Week 4

Tuesday, January 30: Gendered Homelessness

Reading: Klodawasky (2006) & Wenzel, Koegel, and Gelberg (2000)

Thursday, February 1: Physical Health & Disabilities

Reading: Frankish, Hwang, and Quantz (2010) & Street Health Report 2007 (2010)

Week 5

Tuesday, February 6: Mental Health

Reading: CPHI (2010) & Mathieu (1993)

Thursday, February 8: Addictions & Dual Diagnosis

Reading: Fischer, and Breakey (1991) & Torchella et al. (2015)

Week 6

Tuesday, February 13: Parenting While Homeless

Reading: Cosgrove and Flynn (2005) & Schindler and Coley (2007)

Tuesday, February 15: Impact on Children

Reading: Schinn et al. (2008) & Barrow and Lawinski (2009)

Week 7 – (February 19-23) READING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week 8

Tuesday, February 27: Youth - Pathways and Exits

Reading: Chau and Galiuk (2010) & Karabanow (2010)

Thursday, February March 1: Youth - Select Challenges

Reading: Gaetz and O'Grady (2002) & May (2014)

Week 9

Tuesday, March 6: Immigrants and Visible Minorities

Reading: Hiebert, D'Addario, and Sherrell (2010) & Paradis et al. (2010)

Thursday, March 8: Indigenous Peoples

Reading: Kingfisher (2007) & Menzies (2010)

III. Responses to Homelessness

Week 10

Tuesday, March 13: Regulating Public Spaces and Criminalizing Homelessness

Reading: Chesnay (2013) & Gaetz (2004)

Thursday, March 15: Housing Policies

Reading: Fallis (2010) & Gaetz (2010)

Week 11

Tuesday, March 20: Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

Reading: CCEH (2008) & The Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness (2008) & CAEH (2012)

Thursday, March 22: The "Housing First" Paradigm

Reading: Evans, Collins, and Anderson (2016) & Stanhope and Dunn (2011)

Week 12 - Contributing to Social Change Through Awareness Raising

Tuesday, March 27: Poster preparation (in-class)

Thursday, March 29 – Poster presentation (11am-3pm)

Week 13

Tuesday, April 3: The Shelter System

Reading: Hurtubise, Babin, and Grimard (2010) & Hoffman and Coffey (2008)

Thursday, April 5: Service Provision

Reading: Armaline (2005) & Sager and Stephens (2005)

IV. Conclusion

Week 14

Tuesday, April 10: Ending Homelessness as a Social Justice Issue

Reading: Reitz-Pustejovsky (2002)

Thursday, April 12: Concluding Class Discussion