



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

Faculty of Arts

Department of Sociology

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

## Soci401.44 L03 - Sociology of Homelessness

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|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| • Winter 2019 | • TR 11:00 - 12:15 | • EDC 284 |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------|

**Instructor:** Dr. Annette Tézli

**Office:** SS950

**Email:** [atezli@ucalgary.ca](mailto:atezli@ucalgary.ca)

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

**Office Hours:** Mondays 9:00 – 11:00,  
Thursdays 13:00 – 15:00; and by appointment

### Course Description and Objectives

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 our knowledge is derived mainly from media representations, public discourses and academic research. Consequently, most of us have specific understandings of homelessness and “the homeless.” We will critically examine such understandings from 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.
- 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 writing assignments.

## Required Readings

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
<b>Knowledge/Skills</b>	<b>Raising Awareness</b>		
3 Volunteer reflections		varies	30
Standpoint reflection		January 24	5
Small group project #1		February 12	5
Small group project #2		March 28	10
Research topic proposal		February 26	5
Paper outline		March 14	5
	Poster presentation	April 4	15
	Research paper	April 11	25

Assignments for this course revolve around two 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 first before educating others.

### Knowledge/Skills (50% total)

*3 Volunteer reflection (30% - 5%, 10%, and 15% 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 are posted on D2L. You can sign up for volunteer engagements on a first-come-first-served basis after our first class on Tuesday, January 10.

After each volunteer engagement, you will reflect on your experience volunteering. 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. 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.

### *Standpoint reflection (5%)*

In this short 2/3-page reflection paper will help you reflect on who you are, and how that shapes what you know. Furthermore, it will help you reflect on how you are positioned in relation to the population we will study and interact with throughout the semester. 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, as well as our knowledge of the social world in which we are embedded. Guidelines and writing resources have been posted on D2L.

### *2 Small group projects (10% total, 5% and 10%, respectively)*

The Conference Board of Canada identified being able to work with others, participating in projects and tasks, problem solving, and adaptability as key employability skills. To develop these skills further, you will work in small group on a time-sensitive project twice over the course of the semester. For both projects, individual groups will carry out a small research project and will thus contribute to a larger class project that will be displayed along with your individual posters on the day of the poster presentations at the end of the semester. All pertinent project information will be provided in class and 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 (5%)*

First, we have to decide what information will be included in the poster exhibit. 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. More detailed information and additional resources will be provided in class and on D2L.

### *Paper outline (5%)*

To help you stay on track in your research, you will submit a proposed outline for your research paper that details information to be included in your introduction, outlines key ideas to be presented in your paper, and includes a preliminary inventory 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 along with the 2 small group projects on Thursday, April 4. 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.

### **Final Exam Information**

There will be no final exam in this course

## 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.

## Course Policies

### Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Etiquette

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 necessarily summarize the assigned reading. I expect you to have critically read the assigned texts, that you are an active participant in class discussions, and that your contributions are informed by the assigned readings.

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 come late or need to leave class early, please sit somewhere you can settle down or leave without disrupting others. 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.

Please keep in mind that all participants in this class are diverse in terms of their positions in complex social hierarchies organized around social class, race, ethnicity, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, etc. Material discussed in class will at times reflect, at times challenge or even contradict your own life experiences. In an effort to make this course welcoming and safe for all, please interact with all participants (fellow students, instructor, and guest speakers) professionally and respectfully.

### Recording of Lectures

Note that the audio or video recording of lectures and taking pictures of PowerPoint slides during the lecture are **NOT** permitted without explicit authorization. To do so without the instructor's authorization constitutes academic misconduct, according to the University of Calgary Calendar. For more information, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5-1.html>.

### Sharing of Lecture Notes

Note that publicly sharing lectures notes on 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites such as OneClass, StudyBlue, Quizlet, etc. is **NOT** permitted. Any violations are subject to investigation under the UofC Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy: [http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy\\_1.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy_1.pdf).

## 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. Please note that the re-evaluation of course work can lead to the grade being raised, lowered, or it might remain the same.

## Technology Use

Please use electronic devices is during lectures and labs for course-related purposes only. I recommend you turn off your Wi-Fi to help you stay focused during class. Please make sure to mute your cell phones and refrain from using it during lecture/lab.

## E-mail

Please send emails only from your ucalgary account. Please put your course and section number in your email's subject line. 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 will be answered within one business day. I tend to not check or answer emails on weekends. Please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Questions about the course content, concerns about grades, or personal issues should be discussed in person during my office hours. If you have a specific course-related question, please check the course outline first.

## Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point at the Scurfield Hall Atrium.

## Handing in Papers and Assignments

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.

## Research Ethics

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.

This course has obtained course-based ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee. Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are required to follow university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. Note that you will have to submit your TCPS2 CORE certificate in order to participate in any research activity.

## 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>.

## Absences and Deferrals

It is your responsibility to complete all assessments listed in this course outline. If at all possible, you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test as scheduled or submit 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. Valid reasons to miss an exam are: illness, domestic affliction, religious conviction, and student athletes travelling for competitions. 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.

If you have missed an assignment, you must contact the instructor to discuss a new deadline and mode of paper submission. Assignments submitted via email or placed under my office door without prior consultation will **NOT** be accepted.

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: [https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](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).

## Student Representation

The 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington ([suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto: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.

## Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)

## Thrive Priority Support Network

Your academic success and personal well-being are 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

*Thursday, January 10: Homelessness in Canada*

Reading: Gaetz et al. (2016), part 1&2

#### Week 2

*Tuesday, January 15: Researching Homeless Populations*

Reading: Runnels et al. (2009), Peressini, McDonald, and Hulchanski (2010)

*Thursday, January 17: CliftonStrengths Workshop – Attendance mandatory*

Reading: Complete CliftonStrengths inventory, complete TCPS2 CORE tutorial – see D2L

### **Week 3**

Tuesday, January 22: Explaining Homelessness

Reading: Fallis (2010) & Morrell-Bellai, Goering, and Boyell (2000)

Thursday, January 24: Homelessness as a Social Problem

Reading: Cronley (2010) & Boydell, Goering, and Morell-Bellai (2000)

## **II. Select Populations and their Lived Experiences**

### **Week 4**

Tuesday, January 29: Gendered Homelessness

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

Thursday, January 31: Physical Health & Disabilities – Small Group Project #1

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

### **Week 5**

Tuesday, February 5: Mental Health – Small Group Project #1 debrief

Reading: CPHI (2010) & Mathieu (1993)

Thursday, February 7: Addictions & Dual Diagnosis

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

### **Week 6**

Tuesday, February 12: Parenting While Homeless & Impact on Children

Reading: Cosgrove and Flynn (2005) & Schinn et al. (2008)

Tuesday, February 14: Youth - Pathways and Exits

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

### **Week 7 – (February 18-22) READING BREAK, NO CLASS**

### **Week 8**

Tuesday, February 26: Immigrants and Visible Minorities

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

Thursday, February 28: Indigenous Peoples

Reading: Menzies (2010) & Thistle (2017)

## **III. Responses to Homelessness**

### **Week 9**

Tuesday, March 5: Social Regulation of Homelessness – Small Group Project #2

Reading: Chesnay (2013) & Gaetz (2004)

Thursday, March 7: Social Regulation of Homelessness – Small Group Project #2

Reading: chosen article(s) on panhandling

### **Week 10**

Tuesday, March 12: The Shelter System

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

Thursday, March 14: Service Provision

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

### **Week 11**

Tuesday, March 19: Small Group Project #2 debrief

Thursday, March 21: Small Group Project #2 conclusion



**Week 12**

Tuesday, March 26: 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness

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

Thursday, March 28: The “Housing First” Paradigm

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

**IV. Conclusion****Week 13**

Tuesday, April 2 – Poster assembly, in class

Thursday, April 4: - Contributing to Social Change Through Awareness Raising

*Poster presentation (11am-3pm)*

**Week 14**

Tuesday, April 9: Ending Homelessness as a Social Justice Issue

Reading: Reitz-Pustejovsky (2002)

Thursday, April 11: Concluding Class Discussion