

SOCIOLOGY 49S
THE POVERTY OF NATIONS
SPRING 2006

Professor David Brady
Tuesday 425-655pm
Sociology/ Psychology 331

Office Hours: Tuesday 11am-12pm
Thursday 130-230pm
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OVERVIEW

Welcome to S49S: The Poverty of Nations! This class will explore the social science of poverty. About one-third of the semester will concentrate on poverty in the U.S., about one-third will focus on poverty across rich Western democracies, and about one-third will be dedicated to poverty in developing countries. Hence, the class will spend a great deal of time on international variations. Throughout the semester, we will examine a number of social problems, their causes, consequences and potential solutions. Moreover, we will use poverty as a launching point from which to examine other social science topics like politics, crime, education, health, the family and cities. This course is meant to encourage intellectual debate over the nature of poverty. In turn, we will consider multiple explanations, compare evidence and theories and read important literatures. My goals are that students develop as scholars and citizens while gaining a thoroughly sophisticated understanding of poverty.

READINGS:

One book and a set of readings are required for this course. The book can be purchased at The Regulator Bookshop on Ninth Street (NOT the University bookstore):
Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk* New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

The other readings will be available on the course blackboard site or will be passed out in class. I hope the readings are both stimulating and valuable. Please feel free to openly discuss your reactions to the readings. Students should read the assigned material prior to class meetings. Be forewarned, the readings will comprise a large part of each exam.

EVALUATION:

Students will be graded on two in-class exams and two take-home papers, and class participation. The exams will be balanced between lecture and reading material. The in-class exams will include a combination of multiple choice and short answer. You will have exactly one hour to complete the in-class exams. The two in-class exams will be non-cumulative. The take-home papers will be essays on lecture and reading material. The papers will be graded for an integration and deep understanding of course material, coherent and well-reasoned arguments, and professional writing skills. The composition of final grades and grading scale are as follows:

In-Class Exam 1 22%	A	90-100
In-Class Exam 2 24%	B	80-89

Take-Home Paper #1 20%	C	70-79
Take-Home Paper #2 22%	D	60-69
Class Participation 12%	F	≤59

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day late. That is, after the first day late, the maximum grade attainable will be an B+, after the second day late, the maximum grade will be a C+, after three days late, the maximum will be a D+, and after four days late, the maximum will be a D-. Students who turn in assignments after the beginning of class, but on the due date will be penalized one-half of a letter grade – such that the maximum grade will be an A/A-.

In addition, class attendance is required. Since class participation is such a large percentage of your grade, I take roll at each class meeting for the purpose of assessing students' participation (it's impossible to participate if you don't show up).

CALENDAR OF TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Section I: Poverty and Social Problems in the U.S.A.

- January 17 Poverty in the U.S.
- January 24 The Rise of Ghetto Poverty
Wilson, William J. 1996. *When Work Disappears* NY: Vintage pp. 3-50
Katz, Michael B. 2001. "Poverty and Inequality in the New American City." Pp. 33-56 in *The Price of Citizenship* NY: Holt.
Duneier 1-14
- January 31 Crime, Homelessness and the Informal Economy
Anderson, Elijah. 1990. "The Impact of Drugs." Chapter Three in *Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community* Chicago: The University Chicago Press.
Duneier 17-111
- February 7 Families, Women and Children in Poverty
Selections from Deparle, Jason. 2004. *American Dream* New York: Viking.
Duneier 115-216
- February 14 Race and Poverty
Wilson, William J. 1996. *When Work Disappears* NY: Vintage pp. 111-146.
Duneier 217-311
- February 21 Education, Health and Poverty
Duneier 312-357
Reading TBA

Section II: Comparing Poverty Across Advanced Capitalist Democracies

- February 28 Comparing Poverty and Inequality Across Affluent Democracies
In-Class Exam #1 (readings for today NOT on exam)

Take-Home Paper #1 Distributed (reading for today in paper)

Smeeding, Timothy M., Lee Rainwater, and Gary Burtless. 2001. "U.S. Poverty in Cross-National Context." Pp. 162-189 in *Understanding Poverty*, edited by S. Danziger and R. Haveman. New York and Cambridge, MA.: Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press.

March 7 Comparing Labor Markets and Demography

Take-Home Paper #2 Due

Blank, Rebecca. 1997. "The Misdiagnosis of Eurosclerosis." *The American Prospect* January

Bluestone, Barry. 1996. "Rewarding Work." *The American Prospect* May

Christopher, Karen. 2002. "Family-Friendly Europe." *The American Prospect* April 8.

Gornick, Janet C. and Marcia K. Meyers. 2001. "Support for Working Families." *The American Prospect* January

Howell, David. 2000. "Skills and the Wage Collapse." *The American Prospect* June 19.

March 14 SPRING BREAK!

March 21 Comparing Welfare States and Social Policies

Selections from Bergmann, Barbara. 1996. *Saving Our Children From Poverty* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Clawson, Dan and Naomi Gerstel. 2002. "Caring For Our Young: Child Care in Europe and the United States." *Contexts* Fall/Winter: 28-35.

Keister, Lisa A. 2003. "Repealing the Estate Tax: A Recipe for More Inequality?" *Contexts* 2(1): 42-49.

March 28 Comparing Politics and Social Equality

Gilens, Martin. 2003. "How the Poor Became Black: The Racialization of American Poverty in the Mass Media." Pp. 101-130 in *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, edited by S.F. Schram, J. Soss, and R.C. Fording. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Selections from Korpi, Walter. 1983. *The Democratic Class Struggle* Boston: Routledge.

Section III: Global Inequalities

April 4 Poverty and Well-Being in Less Developed Countries

Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom* Pp. 87-110, 160-188, 204-226. New York: Anchor.

April 11 Critical Perspectives on Development

Bradshaw, York and Michael Wallace. "Constructing a Model of Global Inequalities." Chapter 3, pages 39-57 in *Global Inequalities* Thousand Oaks, CA.: Pine Forge Press.

Przeworski, Adam. 2004. "A Flawed Blueprint: The Covert Politicization of

Development Economics.” *Harvard International Review* March 22.
 Finnegan, William. 2003. “The Economics of Empire: Notes on the Washington Consensus.” *Harper’s Magazine* May.
 Rosenberg, Tina. 2002. “The Free-Trade Fix.” *The New York Times Magazine* August.
 Power, Samantha. 2003. “How to Kill a Country.” *The Atlantic Monthly* December.
 Sachs, Jeffrey D. 2005. “Can Extreme Poverty Be Eliminated?” *Scientific American* August 22.

April 18 Ethnic Conflict and Genocide
In-Class Exam #2 (readings for today in Exam)
 Chirot, Daniel and Jennifer Edwards. 2003. “Making Sense of the Senseless: Understanding Genocide.” *Contexts* 2(2): 12-19.
 Selections from Gourevitch, Philip. 1999. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* New York: Picador.
 Power, Samantha. 2001. “Bystanders to Genocide.” *The Atlantic Monthly* September

April 25 Changes in the Future of the Developing World
 Gerber, Theodore P. 2004. “When Public Institutions Fail: Coping With Dysfunctional Government in Post-Soviet Russia.” *Contexts* 3(1): 20-28.
 Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom* pp. 13-34, 146-159. New York: Anchor Books.
 “Ranking the Rich” *Foreign Policy Magazine* and Center for Global Development 2005

Take-Home Paper #2 Distributed

Take-Home Paper #2 DUE Thursday, May 4, 9am

GUIDELINES:

1. **Be on time.** I start class on time and I end class on time. Moreover, I take roll only once—at the beginning of class. Also, please do not leave class before it ends.
2. Final grades are final. University policy prohibits the changing of grades after the semester, unless there was an error in calculating the grades. Relatedly, my record of students’ attendance and absences is not open to debate.
3. Do **NOT** eat meals during class. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.
4. I do not give make-up exams or give incomplete grades, except under the most extreme emergencies. If you encounter such an emergency, you should contact me **before** the test is administered, and you must verify your emergency.
5. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure that we receive completed assignments. If for any reason, we do not receive the assignment we will assume it was not submitted on time. Also, we will **NOT** accept the email submission of assignments.
6. A great deal of this course involves class discussion. Please respect the “rules of good discussion”. In particular, please consider the following: a) be good listeners to your fellow

students (a democratic and open classroom necessitates a respectful environment); b) try to focus your discussion on broader society, social theory and course concepts; c) discussion is usually more stimulating when many people are involved, thus I ask for your help in trying to get everyone to contribute; d) respect and welcome all political and ideological perspectives and give them fair and critical consideration.

7. Respect the Duke Honor Code. The vast majority of students are very honest and I appreciate that. To the few students who do not hold such ideals, I want to stress that cheating and plagiarism in any form are completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Failure to comply by this directive will be handled with the most serious means possible.

8. I cannot overemphasize the importance of regular class attendance. A substantial amount of each exam is based on lecture material that is not covered in the readings. Further, active class participation will be rewarded in the final grades!

9. Students with disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in the class or to complete all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to my attention promptly so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students whose first language is not English should discuss any concerns with me. If students have conflicts related to University-sponsored events, it is your responsibility to inform me at the beginning of the semester and immediately before the day you will be absent. I am willing to accommodate these concerns, but **let me know ASAP.**

10. My notes will NOT be made available to students who miss class. The lecture material in this course is copyrighted and any reproduction of course notes for profit is strictly prohibited.

11. I will do my very best to be straightforward and fair throughout the course. Please feel free to approach me at any point if you encounter any difficulties. I would both be happy to help in any way. Students will find that I am a reasonable and straight-forward person, so long as students meet these course guidelines.