

Poverty and Place

Community & Environmental Sociology 578 Cross-listed with Sociology and American Indian Studies 578

Spring 2015
Class Location: 1116 Biochemistry
Class Hours: T 2-5P
Office Hours: T 9:30-10:30A, by appointment

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Objectives. This course presents a sociological overview of place-based poverty in the United States, concentrating on the economic structure of poor places and the characteristics of the people who live in those places. Together, we will examine the allocation of economic and social rewards in contemporary society with an emphasis on persistently poor rural regions and communities, analysis of selected racial and ethnic minority groups and their poverty statuses, and poverty programs and their consequences for structural and cultural changes. Ideally, class participants will gain an increased awareness of the nature and scope of poverty in the United States, develop an understanding of the sociological explanations for poverty, especially as it is experienced by racial and ethnic minority groups, and begin to critically evaluate public policies intended to address poverty in place. Additionally, class participants will increase their sociological skill set by gathering evidence and critically engaging theory.

The class is organized to promote professionalization. Class assignments aim to develop participants' abilities to summarize and critique information, generate new empirically and theoretically grounded information, and to effectively communicate information through oral presentations and written assignments. Students will learn or hone skills by engaging publically available government and NGO reports and scholarly journal articles, analyzing data through statistical software packages, and communicating effectively through multiple mediums.

Organization. The course is organized into three sections. The first section provides an overview of poverty in the United States, paying special attention to areas of concentrated and persistent poverty. The second section focuses on the structure of poverty in specific places and how it affects the people in those places. The final part of the course focuses on selected policies and an evaluation of what might be needed to ameliorate poverty in place.

Assignments. Grading for this course will be based on the following assignments:

Critical Discussion (600 points). The foundation of this course is discussion of the assigned readings. Two means through which students can demonstrate their engagement with and mastery of the course material to stimulate high-level, critical discussion include:

- 1. Critical Reflections (300 points):** Students are required to submit 3 critical responses to sets of readings (approximately 3-4 pages). The reflections are *polished* critiques of a set of readings selected by the students. They should not be free-associating riffs on the titles and abstracts. Good critical reflections will be grounded in the text—they will include references to page numbers or passages that you discuss. Very good critical reflections will make

connections between readings, connect back to readings already discussed, or discussions from previous class meetings.

Be creative with this assignment. If you are confused about a reading, approach it as if you were writing a letter to the author, asking her or him to explain a point, or explain to you how what they are saying is different from what another author is arguing. Talk to me if you have questions about this assignment.

You will need to submit each of the critical reflections in *.doc(x) format to the course website through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW before class on the identified due date (see the assignment schedule below). Documents must include your name, have page numbers, and 1-inch margins on all sides, use 11-point font (Calibri or Times New Roman) and be double-spaced. **Late papers are discouraged and will be deducted by a full letter grade each day beginning at 2:00P of the deadline, including weekends.** You will need to email me your late papers (kcurtis@ssc.wisc.edu) and I advise you to copy yourself on the message. Critical reflection #1 is due Week 4, 10 February, reflection #2 is due Week 7, 3 March, and reflection #3 is due Week 12, 7 April.

- 2. In-class exercises (300 points):** There will be at least 3 unannounced in-class short exercises throughout the semester. Exercises do not need to be polished critiques of the presented topic or issue, but they should not be treatises reflecting your opinions. Good responses will be grounded in the readings and class discussion. Very good responses will connect themes across readings and class discussions.

I will drop the lowest score. This means that you can miss one in-class exercise without penalty. It also means that you may accrue “extra” points if you complete all exercises. There will be no “make up” exercises.

Critical Analysis (700 points). Students will conduct a critical analysis of place-based poverty. The analysis will be submitted in four parts and detailed instructions on each part will be distributed during the semester. The four parts include:

- 3. Data analysis (2-3 pages, 150 points):** you will summarize pertinent data for the selected case (i.e., demographic characteristics, economic structure, social dimensions). Due Week 5, 17 February.
- 4. Prospectus (2-3 pages, 50 points):** you will briefly describe poverty in the counties you will study and briefly explain its causes and consequences. Due Week 8, 10 March.
- 5. Sociological analysis (8-10 pages, 200 points):** you will describe poverty in your selected counties and analyze its causes and consequences. Due Week 13, 14 April.
- 6. Policy analysis (5-8 pages, 200 points):** you will review policies and interventions that have been proposed to ameliorate poverty, its relevant causes and consequences, and evaluate their merits and drawbacks. Due during exam week, 12 May.

You will need to submit each of the four elements of the critical analysis in *.doc(x) format to the course website through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW before class on the identified due

date. Documents must include your name, have page numbers, and 1-inch margins on all sides, use 11-point font (Calibri or Times New Roman) and be double-spaced. **Late papers are discouraged and will be deducted by a full letter grade each day beginning at 2:00P of the deadline, including weekends (with the exception of the policy analysis, due 10:00A).** You will need to email me your late papers (kcurtis@ssc.wisc.edu) and I advise you to copy yourself on the message.

To assist you in successfully completing the critical analysis, I have scheduled a guest lecture on data and a lab on Excel for 3 February and 10 February, respectively. Attend these classes.

Poster Presentation (100 points). You will produce and present a research poster that describes your project to share with the class in the last week of the semester and to post on-line at Learn@UW. **Attendance for the last class meeting is mandatory.** Poster presentations will be evaluated based on organization, the presentation of quantitative information, and construction. Details to follow. Due Week 16, 5 May.

Assignment Schedule

Date	Assignment	Points
TBA	In-class exercises	300
Week 4, 10 February	Critical reflection #1	100
Week 5, 17 February	Data analysis due	150
Week 7, 3 March	Critical reflection #2	100
Week 8, 10 March	Research paper prospectus due	50
Week 12, 7 April	Critical reflection #3	100
Week 13, 14 April	Sociological analysis due	200
Week 16, 5 May	Poster session and poster due	100
Exam Week, 12 May	Policy analysis due	200
		(total) 1,300

Grading

No curve is used in this course which means that you will be able to assess your progress at any time. You will earn the grade for this course that corresponds with the following point distribution:

- A 1,222 points or more
- AB 1,170-1,221 points
- B 1,105-1,169 points
- BC 1,040-1,104 points
- C 910-1,039 points
- D 780-909 points
- F 779 points or less

Incompletes will not be awarded. Extensions will be considered only under extreme circumstances pertaining to personal or medical emergencies.

Academic Honesty

I expect all students in this course to be familiar with the University's policies on academic honesty and integrity. For more information about the University's policies, visit the Dean of Students' website at:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>. Lack of familiarity with the policies will not excuse failure to comply with them. Cheating (including plagiarism) is not tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade for that assignment, and written reports to the dean of your school or college and the Dean of Students. They may, at their discretion, take further disciplinary action.

I expect that all coursework you submit will reflect your own original ideas and independent analyses, and I expect you to appropriately cite any supporting data or reference materials. In this course, you will be producing papers that draw on a variety of sources, including scholarly books and articles, government reports, and Internet resources. The UW Library has a webpage with helpful links to a variety of citation guides to help discern how to cite such materials (<http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=55110&sid=403476>). Please see me if you still have questions about how to cite materials appropriately after reviewing the on-line materials.

A Note for Graduate Students. Graduate students enrolled in the course are expected to meet the same requirements *and* perform at a higher level. You are expected to engage with the material in greater depth (more advanced analysis) and to provide a more polished product (more advanced communication).

Accommodations. Please let me know in advance about any dates you will be absent from class for religious observances or other reasons. Students with disabilities, including temporary impairments, are encouraged to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/index.php>) and explore the available services.

If you have difficulty obtaining course materials, such as books or readings, please see me. Books are on reserve at Steenbock and College libraries, and other required readings are available on-line through Learn@UW. Books and printing costs can be expensive, and I have done as much as I can to hold down your out-of-pocket expenses for this course. Still, if you encounter any barriers, please see me as early as possible in the semester.

Nighttime Safety

The University has several transportation and walking services to help you stay safe while getting around campus and the nearby areas after dark. To help take responsibility for your own safety and that of your friends, make use of services such as UWMadison SAFEwalk and SAFERide programs: <http://www2.fpm.wisc.edu/trans/Safe/>.

Expectations

What I expect from you:

Workload. This course assumes the “3 to 1” rule, meaning students should expect to spend three hours per week working on course requirements outside of class for every course credit hour spent inside the classroom.

Attendance. Within the classroom, all students are expected to actively participate. Students must be present to actively participate. Class meetings will largely consist of discussion with some lecture, meaning classes will be interactive and students should come prepared to participate. It is important that you attend class and keep up with the readings. I do not make materials discussed in class available on-line. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate. If you know in advance that you will have to miss a class (e.g., religious

observances, athletic events) please tell me by the second week of the semester. Attendance for the last class meeting is mandatory. Tardiness is frowned upon.

Participation. I expect you will come to class prepared to discuss the themes and issues. Regular and thoughtful participation in class discussions is essential in this class.

Assignments. All assignments must be submitted via Learn@UW. Assignments handed in late will be marked down a full grade for each 24 hour period following the deadline. Incompletes will not be awarded. Extensions will be considered only under extreme circumstances pertaining to family or medical emergencies.

Grammar, Spelling, & Mechanics. All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with an 11-point font, 1-inch margins, and page numbers. I return assignments in class, so please be sure your name is on the first page of the assignment. Proofread all of your written assignments carefully. Assignments with frequent misspellings and grammatical errors will be marked down by half a grade.

Writing. Your success in this course will depend heavily on the quality of your written work. Although grammar, spelling, and mechanics are important, it is even more vital that you deliver a clear and convincing argument, and support that argument with compelling evidence and examples. I strongly urge you to avail yourself of the services offered by the University's writing center, located at 6171 Helen C. White Hall. Graduate students and professional staff are available to help you develop your writing. It is recommended that you make an appointment for an individual consultation well in advance of the due date of the assignment for best results.

Respect. The substance addressed in this course can give rise to emotionally-charged discussions. Class participants are strongly encouraged to share their thoughts and questions, and are expected to communicate with one another and are required to do so in a respectful manner. Those unable to maintain a professional and respectful level of exchange will be asked to remove themselves from the discussion. Quality learning is not achievable without tolerance and respect for others' views.

Focus. Cell phones need to be turned off during class (this also means no texting). You are expected to be respectful of other students and refrain from engaging in behaviors that place barriers to your and others' learning (i.e., sleeping, chatting, and other distracting actions).

Laptops or other internet devices, including tablets or smartphones, are not permitted. These devices are a valuable tool for research and study, however, they are inimical to participation and collegiality in the classroom, creating a "cone of distraction."

What you can expect from me:

Office hours. My office is in Agricultural Hall (Room 316B), and my regularly scheduled office hours are Tuesday mornings from 9:30-10:30A. If my office hours conflict with your class, work, or athletic schedules, I am happy to arrange an alternative, mutually convenient meeting time. Alternative arrangements can include meeting by phone or email. I encourage you to use my office hours to discuss any questions you may have about the course content, navigating the literature on your research topic, helping you locate research materials on the internet, or

discussing your paper topics. I will announce any changes to office hours in class, through email and/or on-online through Learn@UW.

Please contact the DoIT help desk (on-line form or 264-4357) if you are having any trouble gaining access to or navigating the course site.

E-mail & telephone communication. The best way to contact me outside of class is via email (kcurtis@ssc.wisc.edu). Generally, you can expect a reply within 24 hours. I am unable to guarantee an immediate response to e-mail messages, especially in the evening. I am not available by IM or chat.

Course Modifications and Announcements. Announcements and changes to the syllabus or course outline will be posted on-line at Learn@UW. You are responsible for regularly checking the course website.

Required Readings. There are three required books and several required articles and book chapters. The required books are:

Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Treuer, David. 2012. *Rez Life: An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life*. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

All other readings are available online through Learn@UW in the *Electronic Readings* module under the *Content* tab. Students are expected to have read the assigned reading prior to the scheduled class. The assigned readings are listed below in the *Course Schedule* section. Please note that the amount of reading is unevenly distributed across the semester. Updates to the reading list will be posted on-line and announced in class.

I will not lecture from the assigned readings. Rather, the material addressed in the readings is supplemental to the material covered in class discussions. Students are expected to integrate the material covered in the readings and in the class into course assignments (i.e., critical reflections, in-class exercises, and critical analysis papers).

Course Schedule. Regularly confirm the course schedule and required readings on Learn@UW.

Week 1 20 January Introduction to course: Poverty and place

Week 2 27 January Definitions and trends I: People and place

Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapter 1**

- Basset, Debra Lyn. 2006. Distancing Rural Poverty. *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy* 13(1):3-32.
- Newman, Katherine S. and Victor Tan Chen. 2007. The Crisis of the Near Poor. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54(6):10.
- O'Hare, William P. 2009. *The Forgotten Fifth: Child Poverty in Rural America*. Carsey Institute Report No. 10, University of New Hampshire.
- Ratcliffe, Caroline and Signe-Mary McKernan. 2010. *Childhood Poverty Persistence: Facts and Consequences*. Urban Institute Brief 14, Washington DC.

Week 3

3 February

Definitions and trends II: People in place

Guest lecture: David Egan-Robertson, Applied Population Laboratory

- Erickson, David et al. (eds). 2008. *The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America: Case Studies from Communities Across the US*. The Federal Reserve System and The Brookings Institution.
- Farrigan, Tracey and Timothy Parker. 2012. The Concentration of Poverty is a Growing Rural Problem. *USDA-ERS Amber Waves*, December.
- Fitchen, Janet M. 1995. Spatial Redistribution of Poverty through Migration of Poor People to Depressed Rural Communities. *Rural Sociology* 60(2):181-201.
- Gennetian, Lisa A., Jens Ludwig, Thomas McDade, and Lisa Sanbonmatsu. 2013. Why Concentrated Poverty Matters. *Pathways* Spring:9-13.
- Lichter, Daniel T. and Domenico Parisi. 2008. *Concentrated Rural Poverty and the Geography of Exclusion*. Carsey Institute Policy Fall Brief, University of New Hampshire.
- Lichter, Daniel T. and Kenneth M. Johnson. 2007. The Changing Spatial Concentration of America's Rural Poor Population. *Rural Sociology* 72(3):331-358.
- Parker, Timothy and Tracey Farrigan. 2012. On the Map: Increases in US Poverty Rate were Highest in the Manufacturing Areas of the Midwest and South. *USDA-ERS Amber Waves*, June.
- Wang, Man, Rachel Garshick Kleit, Jane Cover, and Christopher S. Fowler. 2012. Spatial Variations in US Poverty: Beyond Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan. *Urban Studies* 49(3):563-585.

Week 4

10 February

Definitions and trends III: Concentrated poverty

Excel software training (3-5P, DeLuca Biochemistry B1144A)— meet in regular classroom at 2P

Critical reflection #1 due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

Duncan, Cynthia M. 1996. Understanding Persistent Poverty: Social Class Context in Rural Communities. *Rural Sociology* 61(1):103-124.

Pindus, Nancy, Brett Theodos, and G. Thomas Kingsley. 2007. *Place Matters: Employers, Low-Income Workers, and Regional Economic Development*. The Urban Institute, Washington DC.

Weber, Bruce, Leif Jensen, Kathleen Miller, Jane Mosley, and Monica Fischer. 2005. *A Critical Review of Rural Poverty Literature: Is there Truly a Rural Effect?* Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper no. 1309-05, Madison, WI.

Week 5 17 February Theories of poverty I: Race and culture, and human capital
Data analysis due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapters 2-4**

Wilson, William Julius. 2009. *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co. **Entire book**

Week 6 24 February Theories of poverty II: Social and community capital

Falk, Ian and Sue Kilpatrick. 2000. What is Social Capital? A Study of Interaction in a Rural Community. *Sociologia Ruralis* 40(1):87-110.

Greenbaum, Susan. 2008. Poverty and the Willful Destruction of Social Capital: Displacement and Dispossession in African American Communities. *Rethinking Marxism* 20(1):42-54.

Isserman, Andrew, Edward Feser, and Drake E. Warren. 2009. Why Some Rural Places Prosper and Others Do Not. *International Regional Science Review* 32(3):300-342.

McKnight, John L. and John Kretzmann. 1990. *Mapping Community Capacity*. Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Putnam, Robert D. 1995. Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *Political Science and Politics* 28(4):664-683.

Week 7 3 March Theories of poverty III: Economic, political and social structures
Critical reflection #2 due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapters 5-8**

Week 8 10 March Black Belt poverty
Prospectus due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

de Jong, Greta. 2005. Staying in Place: Black Migration, the Civil Rights Movement, and the War on Poverty in the Rural South. *The Journal of African American History* 90(4):387-409.

Gibbs, Robert M. 2003. Reconsidering the Southern Black Belt. *The Review of Regional Studies* 33(3):254-263.

Hattery, Angela and Earl Smith. 2007. Social Stratification in the New/Old South: The Influences of Racial Segregation on Social Class in the Deep South. *Journal of Poverty* 11(1):55-81.

Loewen, James W. 2009. Sundown Towns and Counties: Racial Exclusion in the South. *Southern Cultures* 15(1):22-47.

Webb, Susan E. 2003. The Bus from Hell Hole Swamp: Black Women in the Hospitality Industry in *Communities of Work: Rural Restructuring in Local and Global Context*, William W. Falk, Michael D. Schulman, and Ann R. Tickamyer (eds). Columbus, OH: The University of Ohio Press.

Week 9 17 March Reservation poverty

Treuer, David. 2012. *Rez Life: An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life*. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press. **Entire book**

Week 10 24 March Borderland poverty

Bauer, Mary. 2009. *Under Siege: Life for Low-Income Latinos in the South*. Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL.

Martínez, Oscar J. 2010. The US-Mexico Border Economy in *The Colonias Reader: Economy, Housing, and Public Health in US-Mexico Border Colonias*, Angela J. Donelson and Adrian X. Esparza (eds). Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

Mukhija, Vinit. 2010. Agricultural Prosperity, Rural Poverty, and California's Colonias in *The Colonias Reader: Economy, Housing, and Public Health in US-Mexico Border Colonias*, Angela J. Donelson and Adrian X. Esparza (eds). Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

Núñez-Mchiri, Guillermina G. 2009. The Political Ecology of the Colonias on the US-Mexico Border: Human-Environmental Challenges and Community Responses in Southern New Mexico. *Southern Rural Sociology* 24(1):67-91.

Week 11 31 March No class. Spring break.

**Week 12 7 April Appalachian poverty
Critical reflection #3 due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox**

Duncan, Cynthia M. 1992. Persistent Poverty in Appalachia: Scarce Work and Rigid Stratification in *Rural Poverty in America*, Cynthia M. Duncan (ed.) New York, NY: Auburn House.

Read related report:

<http://journalistsresource.org/studies/environment/energy/natural-resource-curse-poverty-in-appalachian-america>

Glasmeier, Amy K. and Tracey L. Farrigan. 2003. Poverty, Sustainability, and the Culture of Despair: Can Sustainable Development Strategies Support Poverty Alleviation in America's Most Environmentally Challenged Communities? *Annals of the American of Political and Social Science* 590:131-149.

Sarnoff, Susan. 2003. Central Appalachia—Still the Other America. *Journal of Poverty* 7(1-2):123-139.

Scott, Rebecca. 2009. The Sociology of Coal Hollow: Safety, Othering, and Representations of Inequality. *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 15(1-2):7-25.

Watch related video:

<http://vimeo.com/64968760>

Week 13

14 April

War on Poverty 50 Years Later

Sociological analysis due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

Boteach, Melissa, Erik Stegman, Sarah Baron, Tracey Ross, and Katie Wright. 2014. *The War on Poverty: Then and Now: Applying Lessons Learned to the Challenges and Opportunities Facing a 21st-Century America*. Center for American Progress.

The Council of Economic Advisors. 2014. *The War on Poverty 50 Years Later: A Progress Report*. The White House.

Patterson, James T. 2000. *America's Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Chapters 6-9

Stricker, Frank. 2007. *Why America Lost the War on Poverty—And How to Win It*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Chapters 2-4

Week 14

21 April

Policies for poor people and poor places I

Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2013. "State Tax Codes As Poverty Fight Tools." September. Washington, DC. <http://www.itep.org/poverty2013.php>

Floyd, Ife and Liz Schott. 2013. "TANF Cash Benefits Continued to Lose Value in 2013." Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=4034>

Jensen, Leif, Marybeth J. Mattingly, and Jessica A. Bean. 2011. *TANF in Rural America Informing Re-authorization*. Carsey Institute Policy Brief No. 19, University of New Hampshire.

Martin, Megan C. and Koen Caminada. 2011. Welfare Reform in the US: A Policy Overview Analysis. *Poverty & Public Policy* 3(1):1-38.

Newman, Katherine S. and Rourke L. O'Brien. 2011. Taxing the Poor: How Some States Make Poverty Worse. *Pathways* Summer:22-26.

Week 15 28 April Policies for poor people and poor places II

Callahan, David and J. Mijin Cha. nd. *Stacked Deck: How the Dominance of Politics by the Affluent and Business Elite Undermines Economic Mobility in America*. Dēmos, New York, NY.

Bolton, Roger. 1992. "Place Prosperity vs People Prosperity" Revisited: An Old Issue with a New Angle. *Urban Studies* 29(2):185-203.

Blank, Rebecca M. 2005. Poverty, Policy, and Place: How Poverty and Policies to Alleviate Poverty are Shaped by Local Characteristics. *International Regional Science Review* 28(4):441-464.

Royce, Edward. 2009. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapters 9-11**

Week 16 5 May Poster Session
Poster due by 2:00P via Learn@UW Dropbox

No assigned readings; **Attendance is mandatory**

Policy analysis due Tuesday, 12 May @ 10:00A via Learn@UW Dropbox