

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

Spring 2020
Class location: 115 Ingraham
Class Hours: Tues./Thurs. 1:00-2:15p

Instructor: Rachel Rosenfeld
rosenfeld@wisc.edu
Office Hours: Thurs., 2:30-3:30p
and by appointment
4471 Sewell (location may change)

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. 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 groups of people of color, their poverty statuses, and economic opportunities and outcomes; and poverty programs and their consequences for structural and cultural changes. As the semester progresses, class participants will gain an increased awareness of the nature and scope of poverty in the United States, develop an understanding of the explanations for poverty, especially as it is experienced by certain groups of people, and begin to critically evaluate public policies intended to address poverty. Additionally, class participants will increase their sociological skill set by gathering evidence and critically engaging in sociological theory.

The class is organized to promote professionalization. Class assignments aim to develop participants' abilities to summarize and critique information, to 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 with publicly 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. While public policy is explicitly examined in the final weeks of the class, policy implications will be a core component of the readings and discussions throughout the semester as well.

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

1. Critical Reflections (500 points):

Students are required to submit 4 critical responses (approximately 2-3 pages) to sets of readings. The reflections are polished critiques of one or two arguments within that week's readings. Good critical reflections will analyze the argument(s) presented in the readings (whether you agree, disagree, have concerns about, or have ways to expand/improve). Critical responses should be grounded in the text and include citations as appropriate. Very good critical reflections will make connections between readings, connect back to readings already discussed, or discussions from previous class meetings.

Please avoid simply summarizing the readings. Be creative. If you are confused about a reading, approach it as if you were writing a letter to the author, asking them to explain a point or explain to you how what they are saying is different from what another author argues.

Please submit critical reflections in *.doc(x) format to the course website on Canvas before the identified due date. Documents must include your name, page numbers, 1-inch margins on all sides, 12-point font (Calibri or Times New Roman), and double-spaced.

Critical reflection anticipated due dates:

#1 - 2/6, 9a

#2 - 2/27, 1p

#3 - 3/31 (focus on Reservation Poverty) OR 4/7 (focus on Poverty on US-Mexico Border), 1p

#4 - 4/16 *optional (additional details in calendar below)*, 1p

2. Critical Analysis Project: Critical Analysis with Policy Proposals (700 points):

- a. *Data analysis*: (2-3 pages, 100 points): You will summarize pertinent data for the selected case (i.e., demographic characteristics, economic structure, social dimensions). Due 2/23, 11:59p.
- b. *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 3/15, 11:59p.
- c. *Sociological analysis* (8-10 pages, 200 points): You will describe poverty in your selected counties and analyze its causes and consequences. Due 4/23, 5p.
- d. *Poster presentation* to share with class (150 points): You will produce and present a research poster that describes your project. Due 4/28, start of class.
- e. *Policy analysis* (5-6 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 for your counties. Due 5/4, 5p.

Please submit each of the elements of the critical analysis in *.doc(x) format to the course website on Canvas before the identified due date. Documents must include your name, page numbers, 1-inch margins on all sides, 12-point font (Calibri or Times New Roman), and double-spaced. A copy of the poster will also be submitted to Canvas, but there is more flexibility on the format (to be discussed later in the semester).

More details about the Critical Analysis Project to follow.

3. Class Participation (300 points)

You are expected to read the assigned readings for each class period, be prepared to discuss them, and engage with the material. I will take attendance on a regular basis; however, you will only receive full participation points by discussing the material in class. If you miss 6 classes or more, your final course grade will be automatically lowered by 10 percentage points (a full letter grade). If you need to miss class for good reason (e.g., personal or medical emergency, religious observance), please let me know ahead of time.

Late assignments are discouraged and will be deducted by a full letter grade. Assignments submitted over 24 hours after the deadline will be deducted by 2 full letter grades. Assignments

submitted over 48 hours after the deadline will not be accepted without prior approval with good reason. Please email me your late papers at rosenfeld@wisc.edu.

Grading

No curve is used in this course which means that you will be able to assess your progress at any time.

A	=	93 +
AB	=	88-92
B	=	83-87
BC	=	78-82
C	=	70-77
D	=	60-69
F	=	<60

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 will reflect your own original ideas and independent analyses, and 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>). The UW Library also has training on using various citation managers. Please see me if you still have questions about how to cite materials appropriately after reviewing the online 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 than the undergraduate students. You are expected to engage with the material in greater depth and to provide a more polished product.

Accommodations. 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. The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Please inform me if you require any instructional accommodations as soon as possible, so I can work with you, in coordination with the McBurney Center, to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional

accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

If you have difficulty obtaining course materials, such as books or readings, please see me as soon as possible. Books are on reserve at College Library, and other required readings are available online through Canvas. 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.

Diversity and Inclusion. Institutional statement on diversity: “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” - <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

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

Attendance. It is important that you attend class and keep up with the readings. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate. **Please let me know in advance about any dates you will be absent from class.** Please advise me of any foreseeable absences at least 2 weeks prior. In the case of unexpected or unforeseen absences, please contact me as soon as practicable. Attendance for the last 2 classes for poster presentations is mandatory. Tardiness is highly discouraged.

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.

Grammar, Spelling, & Mechanics. Please proofread your work. 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 utilize 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.

Focus. Cell phones need to be turned off during class and are *not permitted* (this also means no texting from your computer). 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 and other internet devices, such as tablets, are

permitted for taking notes; however, if I notice that students are using them for non-class activities or participation is lacking, I reserve the right to prohibit them from the classroom.

Respect for each other. 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 respect for others' views.

Office hours. My office is in the Sewell Social Sciences Building (Room 4471), and my regularly scheduled office hours are Thursday afternoons from 2:30 – 3:30p. If my office hours conflict with your class, work, or athletic/art schedules, I am happy to arrange an alternative, mutually convenient meeting time. Alternative arrangements can include meeting by phone as well. 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 online through Canvas.

Communication. The best way to contact me outside of class is via email at rosenfeld@wisc.edu. Generally, you can expect a reply within 24 to 48 hours.

Course Modifications and Announcements. Announcements and changes to the syllabus, readings, or assignments will be posted online on Canvas. If you sign up for email alerts for postings, you typically should receive an email as well about announcements. However, please check the course website regularly to be sure you do not miss any announcements or changes.

Technical Assistance. Please contact the DoIT help desk (<https://it.wisc.edu/help/> or (608) 264-4357) if you are having any trouble gaining access to or navigating the course site.

Mid-semester Feedback. At mid-semester, I will give you an opportunity to provide me with anonymous feedback about how I can improve the course. I am happy to take suggestions at other points during the semester as well.

Readings

Most readings will be articles posted online on Canvas, however, there are a few required books (two of which are available **online** through the UW Library System).

Required Books:

- Edin, Kathryn J. & H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Boston, MA. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Iceland, John. 2013. *Poverty in America: A Handbook, 3rd Edition*. Berkeley, CA. University of California Press. (available **online** through the UW Library System)
- Royce, Edward. 2019. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality, 3rd edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Treuer, David. 2012. *Rez Life: An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life*. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press. (available **online** through the UW Library System)

Poverty is an extremely important social, economic, and political issue in the United States, and many resources available on the internet allow us to understand the current realities. In order to incorporate these resources as they become available, I do not have a complete syllabus of assigned reading for you at the start of the semester. There are several important think-tank organizations within universities and government agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in conducting and disseminating poverty research and policy briefs. We will tap into their research throughout the semester and use their e-newsletters to keep ourselves up-to-date on the latest developments in the field. I will post some of the links to these websites, but *if you come across good articles or reports or blogs that highlight relevant research and analysis, please send them to me so that I can share them with the class.*

Other required readings for this course will be scholarly analyses published in social science journals and on the internet. These various online sources and the schedule for reading and discussing them will be available through the course website on Canvas.

Course Outline (subject to change)

January 21 Introduction to course

January 23 Definitions and trends I: People and place

Federal Reserve System & The Brookings Institution. 2008. *Concentrated Poverty in America: An Overview*.

Royce, Edward. 2019. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality, 3rd Edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapter 1 (Chapter 1 will be posted on Canvas.)**

Kneebone, Elizabeth. 2017. *The Changing Geography of US Poverty*. Testimony before House Ways and Means Committee.

January 28 Definitions and trends I: People and place cont.

Iceland, John. 2013. *Poverty in America: A Handbook, 3rd Edition*. Berkeley, CA. University of California Press. **Chapters 1-3.** (available **online** through the UW Library System)

Acevedo-Garcia, Dolores, Clemens Noelke, & Nancy McArdle. 2020. *The Geography of Child Opportunity: Why Neighborhoods Matter for Equity*. Report by The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University and diversitydatakids.org.

January 30 Definitions and trends II: People in place

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):563–85.

Basset, Debra Lyn. 2006. Distancing Rural Poverty. *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy* 13(1):3-32.

Rural Poverty and Wellbeing from the USDA (includes an interactive map for metro vs. nonmetro county poverty rates):

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/>

February 4 Lab section (basic excel and statistics training)

No reading due today

February 6 Definitions and trends II: People in place cont./Concentrated poverty

Critical reflection #1 by today, 9a

Edin, Kathryn J. & H. Luke Shaefer. 2015. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Boston, MA. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. – **entire book**

February 11 Theories of poverty I: Race, culture, and human capital

Royce, Edward. 2019. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality, 3rd Edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapters 2-4**

February 13 Theories of poverty I: Race, culture, and human capital cont.

Wilson, William Julius. 2010. "Why Both Social Structure and Culture Matter in a Holistic Analysis of Inner-City Poverty." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629:200–219.

Desmond, Matthew. 2015. "Who Speaks for the Dispossessed?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(8):1258–63.

February 18 Theories of poverty II: Social and community capital

Falk, Ian & 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.

February 20 Theories of poverty II: Social and community capital cont.

Data analysis due by today, 5p

Warren, Mark R., J. Phillip Thompson, and Susan Saegert. 2001. "The Role of Social Capital in Combating Poverty." Pp. 1–28 in *Social Capital and Poor Communities*, edited by S. Saegert, J. P. Thompson, and M. R. Warren. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Small, Mario L. 2017. *What We Do Together: The State of Social Capital in America Today*. Testimony before Joint Economic Committee.

February 25 Theories of poverty III: Economic, political, and social structures

Royce, Edward. 2019. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality, 3rd Edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapter 5-6**

February 27 Theories of poverty III: Economic, political, and social structures cont.

Critical reflection #2 by today, 9a

Royce, Edward. 2019. *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality, 3rd Edition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. **Chapters 7-8**

March 3 Environmental racism and environmental justice

Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental Justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34(1):405–30.

Kay, Jane & Cheryl Katz. "Pollution, Poverty, and People of Color: Living with Industry." <https://www-scientificamerican-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/article/pollution-poverty-people-color-living-industry/>

Sadler, Richard Casey. "How ZIP Codes Nearly Masked the Lead Problem in Flint." <https://theconversation.com/how-zip-codes-nearly-masked-the-lead-problem-in-flint-65626>

March 5 IRP Lecture by Paul Jargowsky: The Determinants of Rising Neighborhood Disparities, 1970-2015

Location: 8417 Sewell Social Sciences

Time: 12:15 – 1:30 pm

March 10 Southern Black Belt poverty

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

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.

March 12 Southern Black Belt poverty cont.

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.

Prospectus due 3/15 by 11:59p.

Spring Break: March 14-22

March 24 Introduction to BlackBoard Collaborate Ultra (our online platform)

No reading assigned for today, but feel free to spread out the *Rez Life* reading over this extra class period.

March 26 Reservation poverty

Treuer, David. 2012. *Rez Life: An Indian's Journey Through Reservation Life*. New York, NY: Atlantic Monthly Press. **Intro. – Ch. 3.**

****available online through the UW Library System****

March 31 Reservation poverty cont.

For the Critical Reflection #3, required to choose option A or B.

Critical Reflection #3 option A due by today, 1p (with a focus on Reservation Poverty)

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

****available online through the UW Library System****

April 2 Poverty at the US-Mexico border

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.

Ramshaw, Emily. 2011. "Improvement Comes Up Short in South Texas Colonias." NYTimes Article.

April 7 Poverty at the US-Mexico border cont.

For the Critical Reflection #3, required to choose option A or B.

Critical Reflection #3 option B due by today, 1p (with a focus on Poverty on the US-Mexico Border)

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.

Ramshaw, Emily. 2011. "Major Health Problems Linked to Poverty." NYTimes Article.

Wines, Michael and Jose A. Del Real. 2019. "In 2020 Census, Big Efforts in Some States. In Others, Not So Much." NYTimes Article. – *In thinking about data and the 2020 Census, this article discusses strategic undercounting of poorer populations in states such as Texas (including in colonias).*

April 9 Appalachian poverty

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.

Report - "Resource curse," poverty and Appalachia; lessons in research, data and politics

April 14 Appalachian poverty cont., plus rural poverty

Glasmeyer, 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.

Ulrich-Schad, Jessica D. and Cynthia M. Duncan. 2018. People and Places Left Behind: Work, Culture and Politics in the Rural United States. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 45(1):59-79.

April 16 COVID-19

In light of the current uncertainty, Optional Critical Reflection #4 due by today, 1p (with a focus on policy) – This will be graded, but reminder that I still will drop your lowest critical reflection grade. If you choose not to do Reflection #4, I will drop the lowest grade of Reflections #1-3.

*Why Black Americans Are at Higher Risk of Coronavirus:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/07/us/coronavirus-black-americans-race/index.html> (there is a video clip and an article)

*COVID-19's Racial Death Gap Was Predictable: See NY Mag. Intelligencer article in readings folder.

NOTE: The PDF of the article chopped off a couple sentences on page 3. Here they are: "But it's the creation of Wisconsin's particular racist environment that is on full display now. Tuesday saw a statewide election that was simultaneously shocking in its civic irresponsibility and all-too-familiar — marked by a U.S. Supreme Court–abetted deconstruction of the franchise and a callous disregard by officials for the well-being of vulnerable residents."

*Checkpoints, Curfews, Airlifts: Virus Rips Through Navajo Nation: See NYTimes article in readings folder.

*Undocumented Workers: Thousands of Undocumented Workers Face the Pandemic Without a Safety Net: <https://www.npr.org/local/309/2020/03/27/822475329/thousands-of-undocumented-workers-face-the-pandemic-without-a-safety-net>

*Feeding Low-Income Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2005638>

April 21 COVID-19 cont.

*Bonds, Anne. 2012. Building Prisons, Building Poverty. *Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis*, edited by Jenna M. Loyd, et al., University of Georgia Press. (See readings folder for this article.)

*Inmates, Staff On Edge As COVID-19 Spreads Through Federal Prisons:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/04/06/827922287/inmates-staff-on-edge-as-covid-19-spreads-through-federal-prisons>

April 23 NO CLASS (extra time for Critical Analysis Assignments)

Sociological analysis due by today, 5p

April 28 Poster presentations

All posters due today at start of class – I will be adapting the format in coming weeks (likely will be PowerPoint Presentations that can be conducted online and sent to me following the presentation).

April 30 Poster presentations cont.

Exam week

Policy analysis due by May 4, 5p