

New York University
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
PADM.2445 Topics in Poverty, Inequality and Policy, Spring 2013

Professor Katherine O'Regan
Tuesdays 4:55-6:35 pm Silver 206

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Description This course examines the nature and extent of poverty primarily in the U.S. but with a comparative perspective (developed countries in Europe). It considers possible causes and consequences, and the antipoverty effects of existing and proposed policies.

In this course, we consider what is poverty – how do we measure it, what does it mean to be poor? Why is it so persistent, and so concentrated on particular groups? Is poverty passed on from one generation to the next? How do labor markets, family structure, and social organization come into play in shaping poverty? How successful have the array of anti poverty efforts been and which look most promising going forward?

Objectives There are two primary goals of this course. First, on a content basis, this is a course about current issues in poverty and inequality, what we know, what we don't, and potential anti-poverty policy interventions. The topics selected are heavily influenced by the pressing issues in U.S. poverty, although comparative readings are included for close to half the weeks (denoted with **asterisks). As such, the issue of race and ethnicity is fairly prominent in this course and the readings. By the end of the course students should be familiar with the major contemporary theories about the underlying mechanisms that may contribute to poverty, and the state of the evidence on theories, conjectured consequences, and selected policy interventions.

The second goal is to build on previous course work, and further develop critical analytical skills. This includes reading thoughtfully – assessing the arguments and evidence provided by authors; thinking carefully about one's own beliefs and evidence, and communicating well articulated arguments (with evidence).

As such, the classroom needs to be interactive, seminar in 'feel' if not in size.

Overview Section I of this course begins by framing the issues, what we mean by poverty and how we measure it, and why we care. This section also sets out some empirical 'facts' on levels, trends, who are the poor, and how much mobility is there in and out of poverty, in a comparative

setting. In Section II, we focus on a set of social science theories about the underlying causes of poverty, and possible consequences. The final section of the course considers six specific policy areas prominent in anti poverty efforts. These including income and family support policies, education, workforce development, and issues in the U.S. criminal justice system.

PREQUISITES: microeconomics (P11.1018), intro statistics (P11.1011), and intro to policy (P11.1022 or the equivalent, P11.2660). Multiple regression (P11.2902) is recommended but not required.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts: There are two books for this course. *Aint no Makin'it* by Jay MacLeod is an ethnographic study that examines the social structure and aspirations of two sets of male youth, and re-connects with them every eight years until these men are in their forties. (Note: **3rd edition required**, earlier editions do not include the most recent interviews.) *Poverty in America* (**3rd edition**, 2012) by John Iceland provides an overview on current issues in the poverty field. MacLeod is available at NYU's professional bookstore, and in various formats from Amazon.com. The Iceland text might best be purchased via Amazon, which offers an ebook version for \$15. These books are supplemented with additional readings each week.

Readings are coded by location:

C: NYU Classes website

T: Text

I: Internet, link provided in syllabus (most also are located on Classes)

E: E-brary (available through Bobst website via NYU Home.)

R: Reserve at Bobst Library

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for all material and announcements covered in class; if you miss a class you should contact a fellow student for notes from that day. Any handouts for class will be posted on Classes, if feasible.

Class participation (and preparation)

Students must complete the required readings in advance of class for the classroom experience to work. And you must actively engage, both with the material prior to class and in the classroom. To aid in this process, I have kept the required reading to a minimum, and in many cases have provided some direction on what to mull over when doing the reading. Class will be taught with the expectation that students have done – *and thought about* – the reading. **Pay particular attention to the guiding questions included in the syllabus, and on the website, they will frame our discussion.**

Participation in class:

Participating in class requires both preparing in advance, and engaging with the material and discussion during class. There is both a *speaking*, and *listening* component to participation; sharing your ideas and reflecting on/responding to the ideas of others. High quality participation is valued, rather than high quantity. Specifically, when speaking, consider the:

- Relevancy of comments to the current discussion,
- Analysis in your point, whether the argument is thought out and well articulated,
- Its contribution, whether it adds something new and moves the discussion forward.

Students should periodically assess whether they are participating too much or too little in class. In order to help keep some balance and diversity in our discussion, I may be selective in who I call on, including calling on students who have not volunteered.

Reflections on the Readings

Five weeks during the semester, students must email responses to the readings/class (approximately 2 paragraphs). **Three responses** must be emailed in advance of class (at least 24 hours in advance, due Mondays 6:00 pm), **two** after class has met (within 24 hours).

- Ex ante responses are meant to raise a key theme or insight from the readings that is relevant for the class or particularly interests you; they can also raise questions you have about the readings.
- Ex post responses provide an opportunity to make thematic connections between the reading and class discussion, or raise points from the reading not covered in class.
- Both types of emails are a chance to reflect on and analyze the readings, and how they relate to the course. They are a means of participating thoughtfully, regardless of your personal inclinations to speak in public, or whether someone else has already made your point.

Reading responses are required as part of participation, but will not be individually graded. Collectively they are included in the course grade on a modified Pass/Fail system, where particularly strong or inadequate responses matter at the margin.

****The subject heading should be “Reading Response: X,” with X= the number of the response (1-5).**

Students can only receive one credit per week (either before or after class).

In addition to class participation, students will write two analytical memos, and one final research paper.

Analytical Memos

Assignment #1 Measurement Memo (4-5 pages)

The goal of this assignment is to apply data (and data analysis skills) to an area of poverty policy. The specific data is related to measuring poverty. The census has created an interactive data site that permits one to alter how poverty is measured using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Students will use this site to create measures used in a memo recommending and assessing the use of a particular definition (and measurement) of poverty, as applied to a particular policy realm.

Assignment #2 Readings Synthesis Memo (3-4 pages)

The objective of this assignment is to go a bit deeper into a particular topic/day, by reading literature beyond the required reading, critically assessing it, and relating this back to concepts covered in that particular class. Students will select a class from the second section of the course (**weeks 4-7**), read two of the optional readings, and write a memo that summarizes this work and connects it to the broader set of readings for the day. *The day selected cannot also serve as a reading response day.*

Final paper: (12-15 pages)

The final paper is meant to be cumulative in that it builds on the skills demonstrated in the memos and course, applied to any of the six broad policy areas covered in the course, and directly building from the course. By the middle of the semester, students need to have declared a policy area in which they would like to write a research paper. **Changes to the topic require my prior approval.** There are two paper options:

- Literature review with broad policy recommendations. Conduct a literature review of a broad policy area, highlighting what is known and not, determining the most promising policy/program areas and providing some data to support your view, **or**
- Policy proposal assessment. Propose a new policy intervention or assess an existing proposal/program, including a review of the existing literature, providing a critical assessment and recommendations (including data to support your view).

Relative Weights of Requirements

Participation (including 5 Responses)	25%
Memos (Measurement, 15%, Synthesis, 10%)	25%
Final Paper	50%

COURSE WEBSITE ON NYU CLASSES

The site can be accessed from the Academics tab in NYUHome. If you have not activated your account or have forgotten your password, go to <http://start.nyu.edu> . All announcements and class related documents will be posted here.

Some class announcements will also be distributed via e-mail. Thus, it is important that you actively use your NYU e-mail account, or have appropriate forwarding set up

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of the NYU Wagner community, we are all expected to adhere to high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. An example of how NYU describes academic integrity is available at <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/integrity.pdf> This is a good resource for issues of academic honesty.

The reading responses, memo assignments, and final paper are all meant to be individual products. No collaborative work is permitted. Specifically:

Reading Responses: This is a mechanism for my understanding your reaction to and understanding of the readings and class, so they must be written individually.

Memo Assignments: These are individual products – both the written work and the analysis behind it must be done individually.

Paper: The paper must be the sole work of the individual student, using appropriate documentation for materials relied on for research. It is completely appropriate to talk with others about your paper, including getting advice from other faculty. But the content of the paper needs to be solely authored by the student.

Violations of these standards will automatically result in all participating students failing the course and being remanded to the discipline committee for further action.

CLASS OUTLINE (*asterisk indicates some international readings/comparison included)

Section I. Laying the groundwork. What do we mean by poverty or inequality, and why do we care? How do we define and measure these concepts? What do they look like now –compared to historically, and comparative to other developed countries? How transitory are experiences with poverty, and what lasting effects does it have?

Week 1. Course Overview. What is poverty, how do we measure it?*

Unlike most developed countries, the U.S. primarily relies on an absolute measure of poverty based on a methodology developed in the early 1960s. This absolute measure is the basis for eligibility for many means-tested programs aimed to alleviate hardship. The focus of this day is to understand how the current measure is calculated, what that means for what it can and can't tell us about poverty in the U.S. today, and consider alternatives and what they would accomplish (such as those employed in Europe, and the new supplemental poverty measure in the U.S.).

Required reading:

T: Iceland, John (2012). Poverty in America: A Handbook – 3rd Edition, Chapter 1, and 3: (Chapter 2 optional; provides interesting historical context).

C: Short, Kathleen (2011). The Research Supplemental Poverty Measure, Current Population Reports. This is a bit dry, but provides needed details on the new measure. Pay particular attention to table 5a.

C: The CEO Poverty Measure, 2005 – 2010 (2011) A Working Paper by the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, April 2012. **Chapter 5, p 29-34.** Policy Affects Poverty.

C: Meyer, Bruce and James Sullivan, 2012. Identifying the Disadvantaged: Official Poverty, Consumption Poverty, and the New Supplemental Poverty Measure, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. (Focus on Tables 1 and 2, and the broad-brush idea of the consumption comparison, rather than its details).

Iceland provides a broad assessment of approaches, including contrasts with Europe. Short is a government report on the new supplemental measure. Chapter 5 of the CEO report provides a comparison of New York's version of this measure, to assess recent income transfer policies to combat poverty during the recession, while Meyers and Sullivan critique both measures. What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the current U.S. poverty measure? What concept is it attempting to capture? Is the new supplemental measure an improvement? What type of measure do you think the U.S. should use, for which purposes?

Optional:

C: Korenman, Sanders and Dahlia Remler (2012). Rethinking Elderly Poverty: Time for a Health Inclusive Poverty Measure? (Working Paper).

C: **Notten, Geranda and Chris Neubourg (2011). Monitoring absolute and Relative Poverty: 'not enough' is not the same as much less'', Review of Income and Wealth..

C: Amartya Sen, “Poor relatively Speaking” Oxford Economic Papers 2 (35) July 1983, 153-169. A bit theoretical, but a seminal piece.

C: Commentaries (rejoinders) 2005. Measurement vol 3(4) This is a series of responses to Iceland’s recommendation, a bit of a debate on a wide range of issues.

I: J. Iceland and K Bauman 2004. Income Poverty and Material Hardship: How strong is the association? National Center for Poverty working paper.

<http://nationalpovertycenter.com/publications/workingpaper04/paper17/04-17.pdf>

Week 2. Who is poor and anti-poverty programs in the U.S.**

Which demographic groups are more likely to be poor? How has that changed over time? How does the U.S. compare to other countries, and why?

Required reading:

T: Iceland, John (2012). Chapters 4 and 7 (pages 126-132, background on social welfare programs).

C: Current Population Survey Report (2012). Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, pages 13-20 on Poverty. Note, page 20 references the poverty calculator we use for assignment #1.

C:**Smeeding, Tim. (2006). “Poor People in Rich Nations: The United States in Comparative Context.” Journal of Economic Perspectives. Volume 20(1), Winter:69–90. Up to page 82 required, but pay particular attention to 78-82.

C: James Ziliak (2011). **Recent Developments in Antipoverty Policies in the United States** Working Paper, Institute for Research on Poverty. *Provides a background on social welfare programs, and trends for the most recent decade.*

Ch 4 of Iceland provides an overview of trends in poverty and which groups are most affected, using multiple measures (with some updated data in the CPS report). Connect this to last week’s discussion as you read, and assess what is added with his broader measures. When reading Smeeding, specifically consider what the analysis on 78-82 tells us about U.S. policies.

Optional

C: Besharov, Douglas. (2006) “Beyond the Safety Net: A Brief Review Forty Years After the War on Poverty.” American Enterprise Institute, University of Maryland.

C: World Bank, World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty, pp. 2, 15-29.

Week 3 Economic Mobility and Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty**

Concerns about inequality and poverty frequently are connected to whether it is a transient state, whether it has lasting effects specifically, whether disadvantages are handed down to the next generation. This week focuses on economic mobility --what does it look like in the U.S. and how does this compare to other developed countries? What might drive correlations over time, and specifically in the U.S?

Required reading:

T: MacLeod, Jay (2009). *Ain't No Makin It*, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

C: Cancian and Danziger. *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*. (2009). Chapter 7: "Mobility in the United States a Comparative Perspective" by Marcus Jantii. P. 180 – 201

C: Roemer, J. Equal Opportunity and Intergenerational Mobility: Going Beyond Intergenerational Transition Matrices, in *Generational Income Mobility in North America. This is a pretty conceptual piece, try to focus on the intuition of possible mechanisms of income correlation across generations, which raise the biggest concerns in terms of equal opportunity?*

C: **Corak, Miles; Lori Curtis, and Shelley Phipps (2010). Economic mobility, family background, and the wellbeing of children in the United States and Canada. IZA Working Paper. *Pay particular attention to pages 1-16; the remainder of the paper touches on most of the policy fields we cover in the course, providing an overview of where we are going.*

Optional:

C: J.B. Isaacs, I. Sawhill and R. Haskins Getting Ahead or Losing Ground: Economic Mobility in America(Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution). Pages 47-57 on wealth mobility and pages 71-80 racial differences in mobility.
(http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_economic_mobility_sawhill.aspx)

*C: H. Holzer, D.W. Schanzenback, G.J. Duncan, and Jens Ludwig. 2007. The Economic Costs of Poverty in the U.S.: Subsequent Effects on Children Growing up Poor. Center for American Progress. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/01/poverty_report.html

C: Emily Beller and Michael Hout, 2006. "Intergenerational Social Mobility: the US in a comparative Perspective" *The Future of Children* 16:19-36. *This article focuses on occupational mobility (rather than income), which is more commonly examined by sociologists.*

Section II. Poverty Theories

This section reviews beliefs and research about what is behind these levels and trends. Understanding what we know –and don't know—about underlying mechanisms and causes is critical to designing and implementing effective anti-poverty policies.

Week 4 Social Stratification, Race and Ethnicity

In the U.S. social stratification is intricately related to race and ethnicity. This day lays out some current thinking in sociology on how stratification occurs, and how races and ethnicity overlay this process.

Required reading:

C: Doug Massey *Categorically Unequal* (2007) Ch 1 “How Stratification Works”
This chapter is conceptually dense, and might require two reads.

I: Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> **Prior to class, log on to this website and participate in two on line ‘tests,’ race and a category of your choice.**

C: Barnhardt, Sharon (2009) *Near and Dear? Evaluating the impact of Neighbor Diversity on Inter-Religious Attitudes.* Working paper. *** This is a very preliminary paper, do not worry about the bulk of the tables. Focus on understanding the general design and intuition of the study, and tables 4-5 and figure 2. Primarily focus on pages 1-24.*

C: ‘Obama effect’ on test scores. *Newsweek*, 200.

T: Iceland, Chapter 5. *This provides some additional background.*

Optional:

C: Ihlanfeldt, Keith and Ben Scafidi (2002). *Neighborhood contact hypothesis: New Evidence from the Multi City Study of Urban Inequality.* *Urban Studies* 39(4).

C: ***Dixon, J., K Durrheim, C Tredoux -(2007) Intergroup contact and attitudes towards the principle and practice of racial equality. *Psychology Science.* Study is based in South Africa.*

Week 5 The Role of Social and Cultural Capital

The role of social and cultural capital in shaping life outcomes. There is a particular focus here on how these potentially intersect with educational systems and lay the foundation for labor market outcomes.

Required reading:

T: MacLeod, Jay (2009). *Ain’t No Makin It.* Chapter 2 (p 11-23) *This chapter covers much theoretical work. Focus particularly on cultural capital, aspirations, and student resistance.* And Chapter 6.

C: Coleman, James (1988). Social Capital in the creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, S95-S120. *This is a classic. Introduces the concept of social capital, although at points it is not crystal clear.*

C: Portes and Landolt (1996). Unsolved Mysteries: The Tocqueville Files II: The Downside of Social Capital. *The American Prospect*. *This provides a clearer summary of social capital (a la Coleman) and some critical assessment of its potential for alleviating poverty.* Found at: <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=4943>

C: Harris, Angel (2006) I (Don't) Hate School: Revisiting Oppositional Culture Theory of Blacks' Resistance to Schooling. *Social Forces* 85 (2). *There are many tables, table 2 has the most important results.*

C: Boo, Katherine. 2006. "Swamp Nurse." *The New Yorker*. February 6: 54-65
http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2006/swamp_nurse

Optional:

R: Larue, Annette (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. University of CA press. *This book is an ethnographic study of a set of families (middle-class, working class, and poor) and how they differ in child development patterns that affect social and cultural capital, particularly with respect to schools. Read: section 1(pp1-14) and either Part II (Language Use), chapters 6 and 7, OR, Part III (families and institutions) chapters 8 and 11.* On Reserve at Bobst, ebook available, \$14.55.

C: R. L. Hawkins, K. Maurer. (2009) Bonding, Bridging and Linking: How Social Capital Operated in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. *British Journal of Social Work*
Online publication date: 3-Aug-2009.

Week 6 Economic processes: The low wage labor market: patterns, poverty, and the recession.

The distribution of earnings from the labor market is a key factor in inequality and poverty. This day considers structural element of low wage market, including its sensitivity to macro changes and cycles.

Required reading:

C: Cancian and Danzinger. *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*. (2009). Chapter 3: "Economic Change and the Structure of Opportunity for Less Skilled Workers" by Rebecca Blank. P. 63 -80. *Focus on the main contributing forces for poverty: who participates in the labor market, what employment levels looks like for various groups, and what has happened to wages. *We will postpone detailed discussion of the income inequality (bottom of p 75 through 80) until next week, but for this section consider which of these arguments might actually come into play for the differences we see in gender patterns over this time.*

C: Holzer, Harry (2000) Mismatch in the Low-Wage Labor Market: Job Hiring Perspective, pages 127-134 (remainder of chapter is optional). Chapter 6, in The low Wage Labor Market, Dept. of Health and Human Services. *Holzer is presenting a collection of frictions in labor markets that shed light on who within the low wage labor market might disproportionately bear costs of adjustments. Think about how this fits with Blanks broader categories.*

T: MacLeod, Jay (2009). Ain't No Makin It Chapter 9 pages 162-184, Chapter 10 to page 213, and Chapter 14 pages 409-427.

C: Hilary Hoynes, Douglas L. Miller, and Jessamyn (2012). Who Suffers During Recessions? Journal of Economic Perspectives. *Fine to read this as a stylized facts paper: what do we know about which groups are most impacted by recessions generally, and the most recent one?*

Optional:

C: Training Youths in the Ways of the Workplace (2011). New York Times.

C: Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Chapter 2, "Societal Changes and Vulnerable Neighborhoods": pp. 25-50. *This is a classic. Wilson is a sociologist who spearheaded concern about the social isolation of the poor (particularly blacks) as poverty became more concentrated in the 1990s, disconnecting neighborhoods from jobs.*

C: Smith, D and S. Woodbury (2000) Low-Wage Labor Markets: Changes over the business Cycle and differences across regions and location. Ch 2, in The low Wage Labor Market, Dept. of Health and Human Services.

C: Henly, Juila (2000). Mismatch in the low wage labor market: search perspective. Chapter 7, in The low Wage Labor Market, Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Week 7 Economic processes (cont'd): Earnings inequality, growth models and wage inequality**

Over the past several decades, earnings inequality has increased. This has occurred during times of expansion, which historically has resulted in declines in inequality (and a belief that all benefit from growth). What is behind this increase? What has it meant for those who are poor and near poor?

Required reading:

C: Gottschalk, Peter. (1997) "Inequality, Income Growth and Mobility: The Basic Facts." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 11(2): 21-40. *Provides a nice overview of the issues and basic empirical findings. What do we know about the underlying mechanisms? What does this suggest for policy directions?*

C: Neckerman, Kathryn, and Florencia Torche (2007) *Inequality: Causes and Consequences*. *Annual Review of Sociology*, August 2007, Vol. 33, Pages 335-357 (doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131755) *Updates our knowledge, with summaries of the literature and international findings. Pay particular attention to the consequence section. What arguments does this suggest for policy interventions?*

C: Autor, David, Lawrence Katz and Melissa Kearney (2005). *Trends in U.S. Wage Inequality: Re-Assessing the Revisionists*. Working Paper 11627 <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11627>. Skim the tables at the end of the paper; we are NOT covering the paper – it overlaps conceptually with Gottschalk.

After reviewing the basic patterns of inequality over the past 30 years, and the possible causes, we are going to debate why (and whether) inequality matters. From the Neckerman and Torche piece, pick one of the five domains raised with respect to consequences of inequality (p340-345, health through politics). For your domain, (1) consider the evidence/arguments that inequality matters for this outcome (both directly and through ‘externalities’), (2) Using your domain as an example, is the issue inequality, poverty, or particular aspects of inequality?

Optional

C: *Harjes, Thomas (2007) *Globalization and Income Inequality: A European Perspective* International Monetary Fund Working paper.

C: Levy, Frank and Peter Temin. (2007) “Inequality and Institutions in 20th Century America.” NBER Working Paper 13106.

C: *Bardhan, P 2005. *Globalization, Inequality and Poverty: An overview*. Working paper, University of California, Berkeley.
<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/macarthur/inequality/papers/BardhanGlobalOverview.pdf>
***This reading considers inequality across nations, and the potential role of globalization. It is long, but for students interested in the developing world, this provides a great overview of the issue and attempts to add data.*

Section III: Specific policy arenas (some readings are tentative)

This section of the course now moves to anti-poverty policies, in six policy arenas that are particularly relevant for anti-poverty efforts in the U.S.

Week 8 Income Support Policies: Welfare and its Reform**

All developed countries have some safety net system to support the poor. One primary mechanisms in the U.S. and Europe are means-tested income-support programs (‘welfare’). This week considers how these have changed over the past 20 years, and with what consequences.

Required reading:

C: Blank, R (2002) Evaluating Welfare Reform in the U.S., Journal of Economic Literature p 1105-1145 (rest optional).

C:**Hill, J and J Waldfogel (2004) A ‘third way’ in welfare reform? Evidence from the United Kingdom. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (23)

C: Mead, Larry (2007) Toward a Mandatory Work Policy for Men, The Future of Children 17 (2), pp 43-72.

C: Holt, Steve. (February 2006) “The Earned Income Tax Credit at Age 30: What We Know.” **Pages 1-17** (remainder optional) Brookings Research Brief.

C: **Smeeding and Waldfogel (2010) “Fighting Poverty: Attentive Policy Can Make a Huge Difference” Journal of Policy Analysis and Management 29(2): 401-407.

Recommended: rent the movie “Precious” to get a sense of the U.S. Welfare system in the 1980s, prior to welfare reform.

Optional:

C: Burtless, Gary (2009) Social Protection for the Economic Crisis: The U.S. experience. Brookings institute (particularly p1-19).

C: Bradley, Katherine and Rector (2010) How President Obama’s Budget will destroy Welfare Reform. The Heritage foundation.

Week 9: Policies to address Family Structure and the transmission of poverty across generations. Some of the trends in poverty and inequality over the past decades are attributed to the formation of single (female) headed households, with potential implications for rates of child poverty. Here we consider policies aimed at decreasing particular transmission mechanisms between being raised in single-parent families and future disadvantage.

Required:

C: Wood et al (2012) The Effects of Building Strong Families: A Healthy Marriage and Relationship Skills Education Program for Unmarried Parents. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. Vol. 31, No. 2, 228–252

C: Boo, Katherine (2003). The Marriage Cure: Is Marriage Really the Way out of Poverty? The New Yorker.

C: Heinrich, Carolyn, Brett Burkhardt and Hilary Shager (2011). Reducing Child Support Debt and Its Consequences: Can Forgiveness Benefit All? Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Vol. 30, No. 4, 755–774 (2011). *Portions of this get technical, but worthwhile. Consider the implications beyond the program: if lowering child support debt*

increases current payments, what does this suggest the effect of recent efforts to increase collection of payments might actually be?

C: Obama versus Poverty (2012). New York Times Magazine.

Optional:

T: MacLeod, Jay (2009). Ain't No Makin It. Chapter 4 and Chapter 8 (p 140-146, focusing on 143-145).

C: Hill, Carolyn, Harry Holzer and Henry Chen (2009) Introduction to Against the Tide: Household Structure, Opportunities, and Outcomes among White and Minority Youth. Provides a summary of literature on the effects of household structure, and possible mechanisms.

C: Jordan-Zachery, Julie (2009). Making Fathers: Black Men's Response to Fatherhood Initiatives. J Afr Am St (2009) 13:199–218. *In-depth interviews with very low income non custodial fathers participating in fathering programs.*

C: Ludwig, J. and Mayer (2006) "Culture" and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty: The Prevention Paradox. Future of Children 16(2). *This piece assesses selective evidence, and connects this to the potential effect such policies might have on poverty.*

Week 10 Human capital development early on –education and early childhood interventions

This week considers policy interventions during childhood, focusing on improving educational outcomes.

Required reading:

C: Cancian and Danziger. *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*. (2009). Chapter 10: "Improving Educational Outcomes for Poor Children." by Brain A Jacob and Jens Ludwig. P. 266- 301. **Found online:**

<http://www.closup.umich.edu/research/workingpapers/papers/closup-wp-13-improve-edu-poor.pdf>

C: Long Term Effects of Head Start. Garces, Thomas, and Currie. NBER working paper 8045.

C: Curto, Vilsa, Roland Fryer and Meghan Howard (2010) It May Not Take a Village: Increasing Achievement among the Poor, *draft*

http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/fryer/files/SIED_5.5.10.pdf

C: Obama Administration proposal to address concentration poverty, Wiliam Julius Wilson, March 2010.

Optional:

C: Ladd, Helen (2012). Presidential Address: Education and Poverty: Confronting the Evidence. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 203–227 (2012)

C: A Cultural Odyssey. Debra Viadero. *Education Week*, March 2005.

C: Are High Quality Schools enough to close the Achievement Gap?. Dobbie and Fryer, April 2009. **First 7 pages provides details of the program.*

Week 11 Human Capital development (cont'd): Post secondary Training and Workforce Development: *Tentative*

The large (and increasing) role of human capital in determining labor market outcomes and poverty makes it the natural starting place for anti-poverty policies. Yet a large segment of such policies – those aimed at workers post high-school, are playing a decreasing role in federal anti poverty efforts. Is this wise or are we missing an important opportunity?

Required reading:

C: Job Training Policy in the U.S. Chapter 3, Christopher Hill. *The Effectiveness of Publicly Financed Training. Nice overview piece on the trends and what we know. Focus particularly on which approaches appear to hold promise. Where should we go from here.?*

C: Workforce Development Act Reauthorization, Gordon Berlin. 2009. *This is a brief piece proposing what is working and what needs to be fixed in our Workforce Investment Act*

C: Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration Fiscal 2012 Budget. *Read pages 1-21, and then focus on the budget on page 7-8. If you had \$1B more to spend, what would you spend it on and why? If you need to eliminate \$1B from the budget, **what would you cut and why?** Come to class prepared to support your positions in break out groups.*

C: Kane, T. and C. Rouse (1999) *The Community College: Education Students at the Margin between College and Work*, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13(1) pp. 63-84. *This can be read on the quicker side, but please think about the cost/benefit on page 78.*

C: Op Ed pieces on Obama's American Graduation Initiative.

Optional:

C: Stanley, Marcus, Lawrence Katz and Alan Krueger. (October 1998) “Developing Skills: What We Know About the Impacts of American Employment and Training Programs on Employment, Earnings and Educational Outcomes.” *National Bureau of Economic Research*. Originally prepared for 1998 G-8 Meeting for the British Chancellor of the Exchequer.

C: Heckman, James. (Spring 1994) “Is Job Training Oversold?” *The Public Interest*. pp. 91-115.

C: Cancian and Danziger. *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies*. (2009). Chapter 11: “Workforce Development as an Antipoverty Strategy: What Do We Know? What Should We Do?” by Harry Holzer. P. 301 – 330. Working paper version available on line:
Found Online: <http://www.urban.org/publications/411782.html>

Week 12 The criminal justice system. Guest Speaker: Glenn Martin, Fortune Society

This week considers the impact of the U.S. criminal justice system on affected populations. We begin by looking at the large increase in incarceration in the U.S. over the past few decades, and its disparate impact by race and class, then link this to possible implications for labor markets. We end with a quick assessment of some policy options.

Required reading: *Tentative*

C: Western, B and B Petit (2004) Mass Imprisonment and the Lifecourse: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration. *American Sociological Review* 69 (2). *This piece provides a great summary of recent trends and literature. Focus on the intuition of the technical section. Critically assess what this means for less educated and minority men.*

C: Devah Pager, (2003) “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology*. 108(5): 937-975.

C: MacLeod, Chapter 12, Steve (p 311-316), Stoney (p 317-327), Chris (328-324).

Optional TBD:

C: Bloom, D. 2006 Employment focused programs for ex-prisoners: What have we learned, what are we learning, and where should we go from here? MDRC.

Week 13 The role of assets and wealth, and policy levers. *Tentative*

While much of the discussion on inequality focuses on income, wealth disparities are larger, and may play a particularly important role in intra and inter-generational transmission of advantage. What drives differences in wealth in the U.S? How might those differences matter for economic and social mobility? This day focuses on what those mechanisms might be, and existing policy attempts at increasing assets among low income households. Our primary policy focus will be housing. To what degree is homeownership a promising strategy, and what concerns does it raise?

Required reading:

E: Inclusion in the American Dream: Assets, Poverty and Public Policy. Michael Sherraden. Chapters 9 and 10.

I: Shapiro, T. The Hidden Costs of being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality. Ch 1-3. Oxford Press (2004) On line at http://www.brandeis.edu/provost/diversity/texts/diversitypdfs/The_Hidden_Cost_of_Being_African_American.pdf

B: Weathering the Storm. IDAs and foreclosure. CFED, April, 2009.

Optional:

E: Inclusion in the American Dream: Assets, Poverty and Public Policy. Michael Sherraden. Chapters 5 Family Matters, Kin networks and asset accumulation. (Tentative as optional)

C: Financial Literacy. Braunstein and Welch (tentative).

C: Conley, Dalton. Intergenerational Wealth mobility?

C: Bostic and Lee “Homeownership: America’s Dream?” in Insufficient Funds (TENTATIVE)

C: Gregory Mills, William G. Gale, Rhiannon Patterson, and Emil Apostolov (2006) What Do Individual Development Accounts Do? Evidence from a Controlled Experiment. Brookings <http://www.brookings.edu/views/Papers/Gale/20060711.pdf>

C: Helfin and Pattillo, Kin Effects on Black–White Account and Home Ownership

C: Spilerman, S (2000) Wealth and Stratification Processes Annual Review of Sociology 26:497-524. Very dry, but second half summarizes some key literatures

C: Grinstein-Weiss et al (2007) Using Individual Development Accounts to Save for a Home: Are There Differences by Race? Social Service Review. [This is fairly technical but provides evidence of lower savings for black households].

Week 14: Synthesis -Cross Domain Approaches: Guest Speaker: James Riccio, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC). We use this final day to consider programs that cross domains and continents: Looking at results from three programs that span employment, training, education and affordable housing, we’ll use this day to connect across policy arenas.

Required Readings: **TBD**

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Assignments
1	2 Jan	
2	5 Feb	
3	12 Feb	
	*14 Feb Thursday (tentative)	<i>Optional regression review, Tentatively 5-6 pm</i>
4	19 Feb	Assignment #1 due Friday Feb 22nd
5	26 Feb	
6	5 March	
7	12 Mar	*Assignment #2 due Monday March 18th
	19 Mar	<i>No class, Spring Break</i>
8	26 Mar	
9	2 April	<i>Paper topic and description due-email is fine</i>
10	9 April	
11	16 April	
12	23 April	
13	30 April	
14	7 May	<i>Final class</i>
	16 May	Final Papers due

RESEARCH RESOURCES

*Google Scholar is an extremely good starting point for finding literature. It also permits you to find articles that reference the original piece.

Relevant Websites:

Institutes & Policy Centers

Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison - <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/>

Joint Center for Poverty Research – <http://www.jcpr.org/>

National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan - <http://npc.umich.edu/>

MRDC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corp) - <http://www.mdrc.org/>

Poverty Action Lab - <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/>

Brookings Institute - <http://www.Brookings.edu>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities - <http://www.cbpp.org>

Electronic Policy Network - <http://epn.org/idea/welfare.html>

Heritage Foundation - <http://www.heritage.org>

Families & Children

Administration for Children and Families - <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>

Fragile Families Study – <http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu>

Future of Children - <http://www.futureofchildren.com>

Law

Center for Law and Social Policy - <http://www.clasp.org>

Welfare Law Center - <http://www.welfarelaw.org>

Welfare

Welfare Information Network - <http://www.welfareinfo.org>

Welfare Law Center - <http://www.welfarelaw.org>

GRADING CRITERIA

Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- A Excellent:** Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- A- Very Good:** Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- B+ Good:** Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- B Adequate:** Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- B- Borderline:** Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
- C/-/+Deficient:** Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- F Fail:** Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

Student Information Sheet

Student Name: _____

Circle appropriate categories:

Program: MUP MPA-Health MPA

Specialization (if PNP): Policy Management Finance International

Part-time Full time

Course work:

Stats II: completed concurrent no

Particular interest in field/course: