Poverty: Who, Why, How
Winter 2021
Syllabus

CRN: GR 20263
Credits: 2
Days & Times***: Fri Feb. 26, 6-9p, Sat Feb. 27, 1-4p, Sun Feb. 28, 10a-1p
Faculty: Wenhong Wang, Ph.D., wangw@evergreen.edu
Location: Zoom, Canvas
*** Please reserve Feb. 27, Saturday morning from 9a-12p for class related work.

Course description:

Many of us have seen the ugly face of poverty. But what is poverty? Why is poverty so prevalent? Who are the poor? What are the underlying causes of poverty? Why is poverty a disease of the whole society, not just the poor? Why are certain racial and ethnic groups more likely to fall into poverty? What are the goals and purposes of social welfare programs? What are the limits of policy? How can we act as a community to eliminate poverty?

This intensive weekend course will explore poverty in the larger social context of increasing social inequality and use sociological theories to investigate various aspects of poverty and its particularities in the U.S. We, as a learning community, are going to dig deep into how to effect change through collective action.

This class is in an online format where class meetings are conducted via Zoom, and learning activities take place on Canvas. The faculty will offer alternative assignments if conditions or illness prevent students from accessing our synchronous meetings, which will allow students to earn comparable credit. To successfully participate in this program, students will need Canvas, Zoom, a computer, and a cell phone. Students can expect our remote teaching to be 3 hours of Zoom meetings per session for a total of 3 sessions.

Learning objectives:

By the end of the course, students will
1. Understand the current situation of poverty in the U.S., including the communities that are most likely to fall into poverty and the causes of poverty
2. Understand the larger social context of increasing inequality in the past four decades in relation to poverty
3. Understand the values that underscore social welfare policy, assess the effectiveness of policies in eradicating poverty, identify the limitations of social welfare policy and explore alternatives

Required texts:

- Iceland, John (2013). *Poverty in America: A Handbook* 3rd edition. University of California Press.
- Hatcher, Daniel (2019) *The Poverty Industry: The Exploitation of America's Most Vulnerable Citizens*. NYU Press.
- Edin, Kathryn & Shaefer, Luke (2016). *$2 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. Mariner

Recommended texts:
- Segal, Elizabeth (2015). *Social Welfare Policy and Social Programs*, 4th Edition. Cengage Learning.
- Quadagno, Jill (1996). *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty*. Oxford University Press.
- Abramsky, Sasha (2014). *American Way of Poverty*: *How the Other Half Still Lives*. Bold Type Books.

We are also going to read selected book chapters and journal articles on inequality and poverty which will be posted on Canvas.

Course expectations and credit:

*** All your written work should be submitted to Canvas, typed in Times New Roman font, 12 points, double-spaced, using APA citation style. To learn APA Style, check American Psychological Association website: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx or Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide http://owl.english.purdue.edu/. Check for grammatical and spelling mistakes before turning in your work. If needed, students are encouraged to work with Graduate Writing Assistant.

You will be evaluated in this course based on your progress in meeting the course objectives described above, as assessed by the following assignments and requirements. **You will be awarded 2 graduate credits upon meeting all the requirements of the course.** To earn full credit for the course, students must satisfactorily meet all the following requirements:

1. **Participation, preparatory work and discussion:** Students must attend all the class sessions, and come fully prepared having finished readings and other preparatory work. Students should actively participate in class discussion and other activities. As members of the learning community, your participation is essential for the learning of the entire class besides your own. If you are unable to attend class, please discuss this with faculty in advance to find a way to make up the work. One week before our first weekend meeting (February 19), students will finish a book report on one of the class texts, *$2 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, responding to the prompts provided by the faculty. Details will follow in early January. To help faculty have a better understanding of the students' interests and learning needs, students will turn in an intake form by Monday, Dec. 28, 2020. Registered students will be able to access the intake form through Canvas after Dec. 7. A class calendar will be sent after taking into consideration the information from the collected intake forms.

2. **Final synthesis paper:** After the weekend class meetings, students will write a 1,500 – 3,000 word (5 to 10 –page) paper reflecting on your learning in this class. This paper is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your critical thinking skills, analytical writing skills and the ability to ask meaningful questions to take your learning to the next level. In this paper, you will elaborate on a major theme or key concept that has been covered in the course. Your essay will integrate course readings, discussions, assignments. The

paper is due on Saturday, March 6.

***Late assignments**: Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact the faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. An evaluation conference will be held at the end of the class.

Academic integrity: Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information.

Multiculturalism and diversity: Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, workshops, seminar, and other class activities. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

Accessibility: If you are a student with disability who would benefit from support or services to ensure full access to this course, please contact Access Services at 360-867-6348 or accessservices@evergreen.edu as soon as possible and get in contact with faculty for possible accommodation. For more information, please visit the Access Services website at https://www.evergreen.edu/access.

Conduct and conflict resolution: Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards. We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy. We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174- 123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process. We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

Guest policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and

await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

Unexpected class cancellation or delay: If class is cancelled or delayed, a message will be posted on our course Canvas site as soon as possible.