

Rural Minority Groups and Poverty in the United States
Rural Sociology 578
Cross-listed with Sociology and American Indian Studies 578

Spring 2008
Class Hours: TR 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Office Hours: W 3:00-4:00 p.m. & R 2:30-3:30 p.m.

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Objectives. This course presents an overview of rural minorities and rural poverty in the United States. The first objective is to increase awareness of the nature and scope of poverty among African American, Hispanic American, Native American and, to a limited extent, Asian American populations in rural America. The second objective is to develop an understanding of the explanations for poverty, especially among minority groups, and to encourage students to consider rural dimensions of poverty that are often considered without respect to rural/urban or non-metro/metro differences. The third objective is to encourage critical evaluation of public policy options intended to address rural poverty.

The final objective is to actively engage in the social research process. The class is organized to promote professionalization. Class assignments aim to develop students' abilities to summarize and critique information, generate new and theoretically grounded information, and to effectively communicate information through oral presentations and written papers. Students will learn or hone skills in using journal article databases, writing effectively, and analyzing data through statistical software packages.

Prerequisites. Students should be familiar with basic concepts of sociology and prepared to complete a major research project. Junior status and introductory rural sociology/sociology *or* instructor permission is required. Graduate students are welcome.

Organization. The course is organized in four major sections. The first two sections introduce race and poverty in the U.S., the third section concerns historical and contemporary issues facing rural minorities, and the fourth section focuses on policies aimed to ameliorate poverty.

Requirements. The requirements of this course reflect the "3 to 1" rule. Generally, UW faculty assume that students will spend three hours per week working on course requirements outside of class for every course credit hour spent inside the classroom.

There are four components to the course: a book or article critique; group presentations; a research paper; and daily reactions.

Book/Article Critique. Students are expected to complete a 5-page critical analysis of one sociological or social science research book published by an academic press. Alternatively, you can choose to critique a series of three articles written by the same author or on the same, focused topic. The articles

must be published in a peer-reviewed journal. Book or article selections will be submitted through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW before class on Tuesday, February 12th.

The critique will consist of the following four elements: a statement of the author's thesis; a summary of the author's arguments; evidence presented to support the arguments; and a critical evaluation of the thesis, evidence, and use of evidence. More details about the assignment will be distributed in class. Class time will be dedicated to assist you in finding an appropriate piece of scholarly research to critique and to clarify expectations about writing on Thursday, January 31st and Thursday, February 21st. You are expected to complete the book/article critique independently; this is not a collaborative project. The book/article critique is worth 25% of your total grade.

You will need to submit the critique in *.rtf or *.doc format to the course website through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW before class on Thursday, March 6th. Documents must be in 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font, have page numbers and 1-inch margins on all sides, and be double-spaced.

Late papers are discouraged and will be deducted by a letter grade each day beginning at 11 a.m. of the deadline, including weekends.

Group Presentations. Students will be assigned to two groups that will be responsible for presentations on a designated topic, one theory-focused and the other policy-focused. The presentations should cover the major ideas, theoretical basis, and specific hypotheses from the relevant readings, additional information related to rural areas, and facilitate class discussion. To accomplish this, students are required to prepare a handout. Presentations that incorporate additional visual aids (i.e., overheads, slides, or PowerPoint presentation) are generally better received. Students not delivering the presentation are expected to provide feedback on the presentation and participate in the discussion. Group presentations are worth 30% (15% each) of your total grade.

Details regarding the presentations and student preferences for topics will be delivered and solicited, respectively, in class. Class time will be devoted to group preparation on Tuesday, February 19th for the theory presentation and Thursday, April 24th for the policy presentation, although it will be necessary for groups to work together, perhaps remotely, outside of class.

Research Paper. Students will write an independent 15-page research paper on a selected high-poverty county. The paper will be based, in part, on the materials addressed in class lectures and discussions, assigned readings, group presentations, and the book/article critique. Students are expected to supplement the course materials with additional resources that pertain to the specific research case. Class time will be dedicated to introducing students to data sources and statistical techniques to analyze relevant data on Tuesday, April 1st.

The research paper will be evaluated on how well the problem is stated, originality of ideas, engagement with alternative arguments, use of evidence, clarity of presentation, organization, as well as grammar, spelling and citations. The research paper is worth 40% of your total grade.

A brief description of the selected county and an initial bibliography of scholarly references must be submitted to me before class on Tuesday, February 19th for approval through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW. A thorough outline and updated bibliography must be submitted to me before class on Tuesday, March 25th.

You will need to submit the research paper in *.rtf or *.doc format to the course website through the *Dropbox* tab at Learn@UW before 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, May 13th. Documents must be in 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font, have page numbers and 1-inch margins on all sides, and be double-spaced.

Late papers will not be accepted and will receive an F if they are not submitted before 4:45 p.m. on Thursday, May 13th.

Daily Reactions. At the end of each class you will be asked to submit a piece of paper that contains your name, the date, and a reaction that indicates what you learned, found interesting or controversial, found clear or too simplistic, or found confusing and in need of further explanation. On occasion, I may ask a specific question about the material covered that day in class or request that you complete an in-class exercise. You can submit a “reaction” only if you attended class; you cannot make up a missed reaction. I read your reactions after each class to gauge your progress, as well as mine. Daily reactions are not given a formal grade; you receive credit if you submit a reaction and no credit if you do not. Daily reactions are worth 5% of your total grade.

Grading. No curve is used in this course which means that you will be able to gauge your status at any time and that you will get the grade that you earn. Your final course grade will be based on the following components and according to the following distribution:

- book/article critique, 25% (125 points)
- group presentations, 30%—15% each (150 points, 75 points each)
- research paper, 40% (200 points)
- daily reactions, 5% (25 points)

You will earn the grade for this course that corresponds with the following point distribution:

95-100, A	70-79, C
90-94, AB	60-69, D
85-89, B	0-59, F
80-84, BC	

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

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

Required Readings. There are two required textbooks and several required articles or book chapters. Texts are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and a copy of each is on reserve at College Library. The required textbooks are:

Bradley R. Schiller. (2008). *The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination, 9th Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Cynthia M. Duncan. (1992). *Rural Poverty in America*. New York, NY: Auburn House.

Articles 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 (with the exception of the first day). The assigned readings are listed below in the *Course Outline* section. Please note that the amount of reading is unevenly distributed across the semester. Updates to the reading list will be posted online and announced in class.

I do not lecture from the assigned readings. Rather, the material addressed in the readings is supplemental to the material covered in lecture and class discussions. Students are expected to integrate the material covered in the readings and in the class, including lectures, guest presentations and group presentations, into the written and oral assignments.

Additional Expectations, Matters and Etiquette. Students are expected to attend class and to complete the reading before class. Tables and graphs presented in lectures will be posted on the course website, but lecture notes will not be posted. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from classmates if you miss class. Tardiness is frowned upon. Cell phones, SMS and other class disruptions are not tolerated. Class participants are expected to be respectful of one another and refrain from engaging in behaviors that place barriers to your and others' learning (i.e., sleeping, chatting, and other distracting actions).

Please let me know at the beginning of the semester about any dates you will be absent from class for religious or other anticipated reasons.

I am unable to guarantee an immediate response to e-mail messages in the evening. I am available during my regular office hours and will schedule meetings at alternative times. Check the course website periodically for updates and announcements. Please

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

Cheating (including plagiarism) is not tolerated. Students who cheat will automatically receive an F for the relevant assignment. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of your school or college as well as the Dean of Students so that s/he may decide whether further disciplinary action is needed. A clear definition of plagiarism and information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct can be found at the Dean of Students website (<http://www.wisc.edu/students/UWS14.htm>). It is your responsibility as a UW student to be knowledgeable of these rules and lack of familiarity with the rules will not excuse misconduct.

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.

Finally, 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 level of exchange will be asked to remove themselves from the discussion.

Course Modifications and Announcements. Important 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.

Course Outline.

Date	Subject	Reading
T 22-Jan	Course Orientation & Spatial Distribution of Poverty	Duncan, Introduction & Chapter 1
Racial Construction and Stratification		
R 24-Jan	Spatial & Social Distribution of Racial/Ethnic Groups	ERS Poverty at a Glance (ER); Lichter and Johnson (2006) (ER)
T 29-Jan	Social Construction: Race as Fictional Biology	Cornell and Hartmann, Chapter 2 (ER)
R 31-Jan	Finding Social Research	TBA
T 5-Feb	Social Construction: Changing Census Definitions	Hirschman et al. (2000) (ER)
R 7-Feb	Stratification: Systems of Racism	Cornell and Hartmann, Chapters 6 & 7 (ER)
Perspectives on Poverty		
T 12-Feb	Popular and Political Views on Poverty * Submit Book/Articles to Critique	Schiller, Chapter 1
R 14-Feb	Defining and Measuring Poverty * Choose Theory Topic to Present	Schiller, Chapters 2 & 3
T 19-Feb	Theory Groups * Submit County and Initial References for Research Paper	Respective Schiller Chapters (identified below)
R 21-Feb	Writing Social Research	TBA
T 26-Feb	Theories of Poverty: Labor Market Conditions	Schiller, Chapters 5 & 6; Duncan, Chapters 2 & 3
R 28-Feb	Theories of Poverty: Demographic Factors	Schiller, Chapters 7 & 8
T 4-Mar	Theories of Poverty: Culture of Poverty	Schiller, Chapter 9
R 6-Mar	Theories of Poverty: Human Capital * Submit Book/Article Critique	Schiller, Chapter 10
T 11-Mar	Theories of Poverty: Racial Discrimination	Schiller, Chapters 11 & 12
R 13-Mar	Theories of Poverty: Neighborhood and Place Effects	Duncan, Chapter 4; Duncan (1999) Chapter 4 (ER); Ferguson (2001) (ER)
T 18-Mar	<i>Spring Recess. No class.</i>	-
R 20-Mar	<i>Spring Recess. No class.</i>	-
Historical and Contemporary Issues for Rural Minorities		
T 25-Mar	Hispanic Americans: Historical Context * Submit Updated Outline of Research Paper with Reference List	Duncan, Chapter 7
R 27-Mar	Hispanic Americans: Migrant Farmworkers	TBA
T 1-Apr	Analyzing Social Data	TBA
R 3-Apr	Native Americans: Historical Context	Duncan, Chapter 8
T 8-Apr	Native Americans: Environmental Justice * Choose Policy Topic to Present	TBA
R 10-Apr	African Americans: Historical Context	TBA
T 15-Apr	African Americans: Land Tenure	Duncan, Chapter 5
R 17-Apr	Asian Americans: Historical and Local Contexts	Beale (1996) (ER); Yang (2001) (ER)
Policies for Rural Poverty		
T 22-Apr	Overview of U.S. & Rural Poverty Policies	Schiller, Chapters 13-16
R 24-Apr	Policy Groups	Duncan, Chapters 11, 12 & 13; Carpenter (2001) (ER); Respective Pickering Chapters (identified below)
T 29-Apr	Poverty Policy: Hispanic Americans and the Southwest	Pickering et al., Chapter 7 (ER)
R 1-May	Poverty Policy: Native Americans and Reservations	Pickering et al., Chapter 5 (ER)
T 6-May	Poverty Policy: African Americans and the Deep South	Pickering et al., Chapter 8 (ER)
R 8-May	Reflection & Discussion	-
T 13-May	<i>Exam (2:45-4:45P). No class.</i> * Submit Research Paper	-