

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
HBSE: Poverty, Inequality, Discrimination & Public Policy
19:910:544
Spring 2022

Class Time:

Professor:

Email:

I. Course Description

Confronting issues of poverty, inequality, and discrimination is a core value of the social work profession. This course will provide students with a theoretical, empirical, and analytical understanding of poverty, inequality, and discrimination in the US. This course will explore how these fundamental elements of the social environment affect the well-being of individuals, families, and communities and the role of public policies in both creating and addressing these social problems. Throughout the course comparisons will be made with other developed nations.

II. Course Overview

The course will address the following four broad areas.

First, we will explore a number of competing theoretical perspectives on the causes of poverty and inequality and examine the roles of ideology and values in the response to poverty and inequality in the US and other wealthy nations.

Second, we will examine the extent and characteristics of poverty and inequality in the US. This will include an understanding of how these concepts are measured, as well as their patterns and dynamics over recent decades. The course will explore how the risk of poverty varies with respect to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, family background, and geographical residence. Comparisons will be made with other developed countries.

Third, the course will critically examine the complex interplay of processes and contexts that contribute to and are also consequences of poverty and inequality across the life course. These will include discrimination, segregation, family structure, employment, incarceration, health, exposure to violence, and child development. We will again compare these processes and consequences with those in other wealthy nations.

Finally, the course will review social policies in the US which directly or indirectly impact poverty and inequality and will compare them to those in other developed countries. We will also examine the role of social work in addressing and confronting issues of poverty, inequality, and discrimination.

III. Place of Course in Program

This course serves as a foundation year general elective as well as a Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) distribution requirement for all MSW students. The pre-requisites for the course are HBSE I and Social Work Practice 1. The course is also open to doctoral students and to graduate students from other schools and departments with the instructor's permission.

IV. Program Level Learning Goals and the Council of Social Work Education's Social Work Competencies

The MSW Program at Rutgers is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE's accreditation standards can be reviewed at www.cswe.org

In keeping with CSWE standards, the Rutgers School of Social Work has integrated the CSWE competencies within its curriculum. These competencies serve as program level Learning Goals for the MSW Program and include the following. Upon completion of their MSW education students will be able to: demonstrate ethical and professional behavior; engage in diversity and difference in practice; advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice; engage in practice informed research and research informed practice; engage with individuals, families, groups organizations and communities; intervene with individual, families, groups organizations and communities; and evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

This course will assist students in developing the following competencies:

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers: (1) apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and (2) engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers: (1) Identify

social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services; (2) assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services; and (3) apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

V. Course Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Understand and critically evaluate the theoretical background and the roles of ideology and values in society's views of and response to poverty and inequality.
2. Understand the different measures of poverty and inequality, and their consequences for the social construction of the problem, policy response, and political debate.
3. Be familiar with the extent, patterns, and trends of poverty and inequality in the US and how they are distributed across demographic groups and geographic areas in the US.
4. Understand how poverty and inequality impact all aspects of individual, family, and community well-being in the US and describe the fundamental role that these social problems play in human behavior across the life course.
5. Understand the role of public policy and its implementation in producing, maintaining and alleviating poverty and inequality in the US and how this compares with other developed countries.
6. Understand and appreciate the role that social workers can play in addressing and confronting issues related to poverty and inequality through clinical practice, policy practice, research, advocacy and all other forms of social work practice.

VI. Required Readings

All required readings are posted on the **Canvas** course site as either web links or PDF documents or both. For some readings please click on the web link in the syllabus (or on the **Canvas** site) because they include interactive features that may not be captured in a PDF.

Students are expected to read a national (*The New York Times* and/or *The Washington Post*) and a New Jersey newspaper (*NJ Monitor*: <https://newjerseymonitor.com/>) regularly to be fully informed of current events that are related to issues of poverty and inequality in the US, NJ, and globally.

Rutgers University Libraries has purchased an institutional subscription to *The New York Times*, which provides full access to NYTimes.com and The New York Times app. Unlike other Rutgers databases, all users must create personal accounts in order to access this resource.

Please do this right away as many readings require access to the NY Times. After clicking the Connect button in the site <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/nyt-digital>, and arriving at The New York Times website, select “Create Account” to create a NYTimes.com personal account. After creating your account, you may use it to log into NYTimes.com and The New York Times app from any location on any device.

VII. Course Logistics

Course format, attendance, and participation

This course is an **in-person on the ground course**. Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, and be present for the entire session. Students are also expected to complete all assigned readings so that they can fully participate in and contribute to class discussions.

Receiving course messages through e-mail

Students are expected to regularly check their RU e-mail account for course messages. The instructor will regularly communicate with students by e-mail and students are responsible for making sure they are receiving these communications.

CANVAS Learning Platform: Accessing all course materials, and submitting assignments

All readings, assignment instructions, the syllabus, and other materials for this course are posted on the **Canvas learning platform**. In addition, e-mails and announcements from the instructor will be sent through Canvas to the student’s RU e-mail account. Students must have a Netid and Password to access these sites and are responsible for making sure they have access before the semester begins. All assignments are to be submitted through the Canvas learning platform.

Teaching methods

A variety of teaching methods are utilized in this class, including lectures, discussions, class exercises and assignments, videos, audio clips, and readings. The course outline contains a list of the required and suggested readings for each session. Students are expected to have read the **required readings prior to class and to be prepared to discuss them and participate in class discussions and exercises**. Suggested readings are listed as resources for students to pursue as considered necessary; thus they are not required.

Respect for others in the classroom

Social work courses often cover material and topics that can be provocative and polarizing, with room for multiple and diverse perspectives. We all must treat each other with respect when opinions are shared. Language should be used that recognizes diversity and is respectful of others. It is also imperative, as we struggle with complex political, personal, and social issues, that we not silence others by assuming that there are "politically correct" lines of thought that cannot be challenged. Nonetheless, as social workers, our opinions and conversations should always be in line with the code of ethics of the Social Work Profession.

<https://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/nasw-code-of-ethics.pdf>

VIII. Course Assignments and Grading

1. **Weekly reading responses (*starting week 2*) (20%).**

Each week students will submit through Canvas two (2) questions (or comments, thoughts, ideas) related to at least one of the required readings (or videos, radio clips, etc.) for that week. They must also be prepared to bring these up in class, though not everyone will be able to do this every week. Questions must include citations to the readings they are referencing. These questions will be graded *as turned in or not turned in (0/1), with late submissions counted as 0. **Due by midnight the day before class.***

2. **Participation in weekly class activities (30%).**

Each week students will engage with a specific in-class activity, which may include a discussion, class exercise, video, or podcast. Weekly activities may or may not involve submission of something, but this will happen during class time. Weekly activities will be graded *on a 3-point scale: 0= absent or did not participate; 1=present but did not fully participate; 2= fully participated.*

3. **Three current events articles (15%)**

Students will find and summarize relevant articles from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or *The New Jersey Monitor* for **three (3)** class sessions. Each article will be accompanied by a one to two paragraph summary of the article, explanation of how it is related to our course, and a discussion question for the class. Students should be prepared to briefly present their article to the class, though not every student will be asked to present each time. Current events submissions are **due by midnight the day before class.** Detailed assignment instructions are posted on Canvas. Current events submissions will be graded *on a 3-point scale: 0= no submission; 1=submission is late, incomplete, or incorrect; 2= submitted on time, complete, and correct.* Students can only submit one current event per week.

4. **One policy advocacy blog post or opinion piece (30%)**

You will select a social problem, related to poverty, inequality, or discrimination, that is of particular interest to you and write a blog post or an op-ed (opinion) piece. This piece will describe the social problem and advocate for a particular policy position with regards to this social problem. The post should be clear and concise – no more than two single-spaced pages (800 words max). Detailed assignment instructions available on Canvas.

Select social problem to focus on by week 6. Due week 15

5. **Attendance and participation (5%)**

Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire session. Students are also expected to be prepared for class by having read the assigned material and to actively participate and engage in class discussions and activities.

Rutgers MSW Program-Wide Grading Scale

Grades for all MSW courses will be assigned based on the following percentage point cutoffs. Scores of 0.5 and above will be rounded up to the next whole number.

A	92-100
B+	87-91
B	82-86
C+	77-81
C	70-76
F	0-69

IX. Diversity Statement

The School of Social Work supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences and identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, age, etc.) are respected and recognized as a source of strength. Students and faculty are expected to respect differences and contribute to a learning environment that allows for a diversity of thought and worldviews. Students who experience any concern around these issues should speak privately with the professor immediately.

X. School of Social Work Mission Statement and School-Wide Learning Goals

The mission of the School of Social Work is to develop and disseminate knowledge through social work research, education, and training that promotes social and economic justice and strengths individual, family, and community well-being, in this diverse and increasingly global environment of New Jersey and beyond.

Upon graduation all students will be able to:

- Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior;
- Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice; and
- Engage, Assess, and Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

XI. Course Evaluation

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester, and all answers are confidential and anonymous. The instructor may also choose to conduct a mid-semester evaluation.

XII. Academic Resources

Library Research Assistance:

Social Work Research Guide: <https://libguides.rutgers.edu/socialwork>

Meredith Parker is the social work librarian on the New Brunswick Campus

meredith.parker@rutgers.edu p. 848-932-6124 ;

Natalie Borisovets is at Newark, Dana Library natalieb@rutgers.edu 973-353-5909;

Katie Anderson is at Camden, Robeson Library: Katie.anderson@rutgers.edu 856-225-2830.

They are all available to meet with students.

Writing Assistance

Success in graduate school and within the larger profession of social work depends on strong writing skills. Several resources are available to help students strengthen their professional and academic writing skills. Writing assistance is available to all MSW students as described below.

- **New Brunswick Campus:** All MSW SSW students (New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, Intensive Weekend, online and blended) are eligible to access writing assistance at the New Brunswick Learning Center. Online tutoring may also be available. <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-tutoring>
- **Newark Campus:** The Newark writing center is available for MSW students on the Newark campus by appointment. <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>
- **Camden Campus:** The Camden learning center provides writing assistance for MSW students on the Camden campus. <http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/writing-assistance>

Additional online resources

APA Style

All students are expected to adhere to the citation style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (2020). It can be purchased at [APA Manual 7th Edition](#). The Purdue OWL website also provide assistance with APA style <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Email Etiquette for Students

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/694/01/>

XIII. Academic Integrity

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity and abiding by them in all aspects of their work at the University. Students are also encouraged to help educate fellow students about academic integrity and to bring all alleged violations of academic integrity they encounter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.” All SSW students are expected to review and familiarize themselves with the [RU Academic Integrity Policy](#) in its’ entirety.

As per Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, “The principles of academic integrity require that a student: make sure that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations; properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, images, or words of others; properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work; obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results

inconsistent with the student's interpretation or conclusions; treat all other students ethically, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This principle requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress; uphold the ethical standards and professional code of conduct in the field for which the student is preparing."

Students should review all types of Academic Integrity Violations per the RU Academic Integrity Policy. Below are some of the more common violations, as articulated in Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy:

“Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, images, or results, no matter the form or media, without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, a student must identify every direct quotation using quotation marks or appropriate indentation and cite both direct quotation and paraphrasing properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are: Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution; Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own, regardless of the nature of the assignment; Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources, regardless of format, without proper attribution.”

“Cheating: Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one's own work when others prepared them. Some common examples are: Prohibited collaboration: receiving research, programming, data collection, or analytical assistance from others or working with another student on an assignment where such help is not permitted; Copying another student's work or answers on a quiz or examination; Using or having access to books, notes, calculators, cell phones, technology, or other prohibited devices or materials during a quiz or examination; Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructors involved; Preprogramming a calculator or other device to contain answers, formulas, or other unauthorized information for use during a quiz or examination.; Acquiring a copy of an examination from an unauthorized source before the examination; Having a substitute take an examination in one's place; Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement; Submitting as one's own work a term paper or other assignment prepared, in whole or in part, by someone else.”

Any faculty member or academic administrator who becomes aware of a possible academic integrity violation must initiate a formal complaint with the Office of Student Conduct and the SSW's Academic Integrity Facilitator (**Associate Dean Laura Curran** at lacurran@ssw.rutgers.edu). The AIF deciding the case (the “adjudicator”) shall notify the accused student of the allegation in writing or by electronic communication within fifteen working days of the time the faculty member becomes aware of the alleged violation.

Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade shall be assigned until the case is resolved. For more information, see [RU Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Procedures for Adjudicating Academic Integrity Violations](#)

To promote a strong culture of academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: *On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment.*

XIV. Disability Accommodation

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus' disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>

XV. Other Resources

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. Confidential support and academic advocacy are available through the Rutgers Office on Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, 732.932.1181, <http://vpva.rutgers.edu>. Services are free and confidential and available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

XVI. Semester at a Glance Course Overview

Week Topic

Part 1: Understanding Poverty, Inequality & Discrimination

- 1 Introduction & Views of Poverty & Inequality
- 2 Defining & Measuring Poverty
- 3 Economic Inequality
- 4 Economic Inequality & Economic Mobility
- 5 Discrimination by Race & Ethnicity
- 6 Discrimination by Gender

Part 2: Causes, Contexts & Consequences

- 7 Segregation, Neighborhoods & Housing
- 8 Schools & Education
- 9 Incarceration & the Criminal Justice System
- 10 Employment & Labor Market Conditions
- 11 Health & Family Well-being

Part 3: Policies: The Good, the Bad, and the Bold

- 12 Social Policies I: Power & Representation
- 13 Social Policies II: Current Policies, the Good and the Bad
- 14 Social Policies III: Bold & Innovative Ideas to Reduce Poverty & Inequality
- 15 Discussion and Presentations of Students' Final Assignments

Useful Websites, Films, and Other Resources for Further Exploration

- Growing Apart: A Political History of American Inequality. 2013. Gordon, Colin.
<http://scalar.usc.edu/works/growing-apart-a-political-history-of-americaninequality/index>
- Inequality.org: Documenting Inequality in the US & Advocating for Policies to Reduce Inequality: <https://inequality.org/>
- Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality. <https://inequality.stanford.edu/>
- Opportunity Insights: <https://opportunityinsights.org/>
- American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare Grand Challenges Initiative
<http://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/>
- Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/index.htm>
- University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research. <http://www.ukcpr.org/>
- Center on Poverty & Social Policy. Columbia University.
<https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/>
- Social Welfare History Project. Virginia Commonwealth University.
<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/>
- Police and Criminal Justice Reform:
 - Portals Policing Project: <https://www.portalspolicingproject.com/>
 - Abolition (of the carceral state) Movement : <https://www.8toabolition.com/>
- Seven Up Documentary Series. British documentary following 14 children of different class backgrounds from when they were 7 years old in 1964 every few years. Last episode was 2019, when they are 63. Considered one of the most important studies of inequality and effects of class on outcomes.
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jun/01/seven-up-at-63-documentary-michael-apted-cameraman-george-jesse-turner-interview>
- Documentary Film: Race: The Power of An Illusion.
<https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/qa/why-was-racist-ideology-so-easy-white-america-accept-and-internalize>
Watch here: <https://www.njvid.net/show.php?pid=njcore:17811>
- 1619 Project. The legacy of slavery in the US.
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>
- The Atlantic Magazine Series on Race and Racism:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2020/06/atlantic-reader-race-and-racism-us/613057/>
- The America We Need. Series from the NY Times. 2020. Essays on how the Pandemic has revealed and aggravated inequality and ideas about how this crisis provides an opportunity to build a better America.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-inequality-america.html>

XVII. Detailed Course Outline

Week 1:

Topic: Course Overview & Views of Poverty & Inequality

- Course overview
- Why study poverty and inequality?
- What are the differing views about the causes of poverty & inequality in the US?
- What are these differing views based on? Experience? Political ideology? Religion? Racism? Research evidence?
- What has the pandemic revealed about poverty and inequality in the US?

Required Readings:

- Heather McGhee, February 13, 2021. The Way out OF America’s Zero-Sum Thinking on Race and Wealth. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/13/opinion/race-economy-inequality-civil-rights.html>
- The America We Need: Introduction. NY Times Series on the Effect of the Pandemic on the US. OR listen to the podcast of this essay (20 minutes – scroll a bit down to reach the audio option) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-inequality-america.html>
- The Costs of Poverty Factsheet: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/costs-of-poverty-fact-sheet/>

Supplementary Readings:

AASWSW. Grand Challenges for Social Work. Reversing Extreme Inequality. (*Increases in Inequality: p. 3-8*). <http://aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WP16-with-cover-2.pdf>

Week 2:

Topic: Defining & Measuring Poverty

Questions to Consider

- What are different ways to measure poverty and what are the debates around these?
- How does political ideology play a role in these debates?
- What is the official poverty measure in the US and what are the problems with this measure?
- What is the extent of poverty in the US and who is most likely to be affected? What is the role of age, gender, race, ethnicity, geography, place of birth, family structure?

Required Readings:

- Iceland, John. 2013. Poverty in America: A Handbook (3rd Edition). *Introduction (p. 1-6)*. University of California Press.
- Iceland: Chapter 2: Methods of Measuring Poverty (p. 1-17)
- How the Census Bureau Measures Poverty. 2017. (1 page infographic) https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2017/demo/poverty_measure-how.html

- Center for American Progress. 2021. The Basic Facts about Children in Poverty. (**Read p. 1-10 Up To: Recommendations**). <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/basic-facts-children-poverty/>

Supplementary Readings:

Economic Fallout from Covid-29 Continues to Hit Lower Income Americans the Hardest
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/09/24/economic-fallout-from-covid-19-continues-to-hit-lower-income-americans-the-hardest/>

Center for American Progress. 2020. Poverty Line Matters, But Isn't Capturing Everyone.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2020/03/05/481314/poverty-line-matters-isnt-capturing-everyone/>

Week 3:

Topic: Economic Inequality

Questions to Consider

- What is economic inequality and how does it differ from poverty?
- How is inequality measured? What is the extent of inequality in the US?
- How does wealth inequality differ from income inequality?
- How do we compare to other rich countries on economic inequality?

Required Readings:

- Measuring Inequality. 2019. Thomas McGregor, Brock Smith & Samuel Willis. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 35(3):368. (**READ p. 368-375 ONLY – 7 pages**)
- Is Inequality a Problem? Samuel Scheffler. 2020. NY Times. The America We Need Series (2 pages). <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/opinion/economic-inequality-moral-philosophy.html>
- Inequality.org: Read the section on **Income Inequality**: <https://inequality.org/facts/income-inequality/>
- Inequality.org: Read the section **Wealth inequality**: <https://inequality.org/facts/wealth-inequality/>

Supplementary Readings:

Crystal, Stephen, Shea, Dennis G. & Adrianna M. Reyes. 2016. Cumulative Advantage, Cumulative Disadvantage, and Evolving Patterns of Late-Life Inequality. *The Gerontologist*. Online first.

Summary of findings: <https://news.rutgers.edu/late-life-economic-inequality-has-risen-sharply-recent-decades-rutgers-study-finds/20160330#.Wk12hVVKvX4>

Week 4:

Topic: Economic Inequality & Economic Mobility

Questions to consider:

- How is wealth inequality related to social policies?

- What is economic mobility and how is it related to inequality?
- What is the difference between absolute and relative mobility?
- How much social mobility is there in the US and how has it changed over time?
- How does the extent of social mobility in the US compare with other rich nations?

Required Readings:

- Demos. 2019. The Asset Value of Whiteness: Understanding the Racial Wealth Gap. (13 pages with graphs and figures)
https://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Asset%20Value%20of%20Whiteness_0.pdf
- Racial Wealth Gap, Explained. 2020. 16 minutes. Vox Media:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqrhn8khGLM>
- Economic Mobility Memo 1: Definitions and Trends, Institute for Research on Poverty. University of Wisconsin-Madison (**Read p. 1-10 ONLY**).
<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Economic-Mobility-Memo-1-Definitions-and-Trends-April-2020.pdf>
- Watch Pew Video: Absolute vs. Relative Mobility (3 minutes).
<https://youtu.be/fTDhi12rqYc>

Supplementary Reading:

Pew Research. 2012. Pursuing the American Dream: Economic Mobility Across Generations. (p. 1-27 w/charts)
http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2012/pursuingamericandream.pdf.pdf

Pew Research Center. 2017. How wealth inequality has changed in the US since the great recession by race, ethnicity, and income. (5 pages)
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/01/how-wealth-inequality-has-changed-in-the-u-s-since-the-great-recession-by-race-ethnicity-and-income/>

Pew Research. 2011. Does America Promote Mobility As Well As Other Nations? Economic Mobility Project. (p. 1-5 w/charts) <https://www.russellsage.org/sites/all/files/does-america-promote-economic-mobility.pdf>

Week 5:

Topic: Discrimination and Race & Ethnicity

Questions to consider

- How is race a social construction?
- How can discrimination be defined and measured?
- How can discrimination (in education, employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets) be both a cause and a consequence of poverty and inequality?
- What is the role of social policy in discrimination?

Required Readings:

- Pager, Devah & Hana Shepherd. 2008. "The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:181-209.
- How the Media Distorts Black Families. Summary of New Study. Jan, Tracy. Sept. 18, 2017. *The Washington Post*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2017/12/29/a374a268-ea6d-11e7-8a6a-80acf0774e64_story.html?utm_term=.3ae4fc51ce6e
 - Explore the full report: Dangerous Distortions by Color of Change.
<https://colorofchange.org/dangerousdistortion/>

Listen or Read In class:

Podcast by Nikole Hannah-Jones. 2019. The 1619 Project, *Episode 1: The Fight for a True Democracy* (42 minutes) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/23/podcasts/1619-slavery-anniversary.html>

OR

Nikole Hannah-Jones. Pulitzer Prize winning Introduction to *The 1619 Project*. *Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true*. 2019. NY Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html>

Supplementary Readings:

Oliver, Melvin & Thomas M. Shapiro. 2006. *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

Chapter 1: "Race, Wealth, and Inequality." (p. 11-33).

Chapter 2: "A Sociology of Race and Inequality." (p. 35-54).

Documentary Film: Race: The Power of An Illusion, 3 hours, 3 episodes

<https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/qa/why-was-racist-ideology-so-easy-white-america-accept-and-internalize>

<https://www.njvid.net/show.php?pid=njcore:17811>

Week 6:

Topic: Discrimination and Gender

Questions to Consider:

- How do we measure & define gender discrimination?
- What is the role of employment, motherhood and care work?
- How is gender related to poverty & inequality?
- How is gender inequality related to sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and other forms of violence against women?
- What is the role of social policies?

Required Readings:

- England, Paula. 2005. "Gender Inequality in Labor Markets: The Role of Motherhood and Segregation." *Social Politics* 12: 264-288.

- Banks, Nina. February 5, 2020. Black Women in the US and Unpaid Collective Work: Theorizing the Community as a Site of Production. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/05/business/black-women-economists-nina-banks.html>
- Women's Unpaid Labor is Worth \$10.9 Trillion. 2020. NY Times (very short). <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/04/opinion/women-unpaid-labor.html>
- Economic Inequality Across Gender Diversity: Gender Inequality & Covid. 2020. <https://inequality.org/facts/gender-inequality/>

Watch in Class

- Why Women Are Paid Less. Vox Media Explainer. (18 minute video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP8dLUxBfsU>

Due before class: Select and submit description of social problem to focus on for op-ed/blog post assignment.

In a sentence or two:

1. Identify the social problem that you want to focus on
2. Describe why it is a problem.

For example: "The social problem I will focus on is child poverty. Child poverty is a problem because the level of child poverty in the US is much higher than in other industrialized, rich countries. Children who experience poverty are more likely to face numerous conditions that may harm their health and development, including food insecurity, unstable and unsafe housing, dangerous neighborhoods, and toxic environments."

Supplementary Readings:

NY Times. Why Men Don't Want Jobs Mostly Done by Women. 2017.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/04/upshot/why-men-dont-want-the-jobs-done-mostly-by-women.html?_r=0

Research Brief. RSF. Great Recession & Intimate Partner Violence

https://www.russellsage.org/sites/default/files/pavlenko_brief_09082016.pdf

Folbre, Nancy and Julie A. Nelson. "For Love or Money – Or Both?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 123-140

Christopher Uggen & Amy Blackstone. 2004. Sexual Harassment as a Gendered Expression of Power. *American Sociological Review*, 69(1):

Week 7:

Topic: Segregation, Neighborhoods & Housing

Questions to Consider

- What is the relationship between discrimination and segregation?
- What role did housing policies play? And what role do they continue to play?
- What role do neighborhoods play in poverty, inequality, and social mobility?
- How are housing policies related to education and children's life chances?

Required Readings

- A vast wealth gap, driven by segregation, redlining, evictions and exclusion, separates Black and white America. 2019. Trymaine Lee. 1619 Project. NY Times. <https://nyti.ms/2HIC54j>
- What does a traffic jam in Atlanta have to do with segregation? Quite a lot. Kevin M. Kruse. 1619 Project. NY Times. 2019. <https://nyti.ms/2Vg3nqY>
- How Redlining Shaped Black America As We Know It. The Root (8 minute video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2o-yD0wGxAc&feature=youtu.be>
- NY Times. Matthew Desmond. 2017. How Homeownership Became the Engine of American Inequality. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/magazine/how-homeownership-became-the-engine-of-american-inequality.html?_r=0

Supplementary Readings

Sharkey, Patrick. 2009. Neighborhoods and the Black-White Mobility Gap. Pew Research, Economic Mobility Project (p. 1-23 w/charts). http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/economic_mobility/pewsharkeyv12pdf.pdf

The Atlantic Series on Segregation & Housing Policies. Alana Semuels. 2015. Where Should Poor People Live? June 2, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/06/where-should-poor-people-live/394556/>

Week 8:

Topic: Schools & Education

Questions to Consider

- What is the connection between residential segregation and inequalities in educational access and outcomes?
- How do experiences of children in higher and lower-SES families differ and what is the role of these experiences in perpetuating inequalities?
- What is the role of institutions and policies?
- What types of interventions should be considered to improve (and equalize) access to education?

Required Readings:

- Harming Our Common Future: America's Segregated Schools 65 Years after Brown. Frankenberg, Erica, Jongyeon Ee, Jennifer B. Ayscue, Gary Orfield. 2019. UCLA Civil Rights Project. **(READ Introduction (p. 6-15) AND Recommendations (p. 35-38))**. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/harming-our-common-future-americas-segregated-schools-65-years-after-brown/Brown-65-050919v4-final.pdf>

- NY Times Article about this report:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/us/threatening-the-future-the-high-stakes-of-deepening-school-segregation.html>
- Cole, Nicki Lisa. "Understanding the School-to-Prison Pipeline." ThoughtCo, Oct. 21, 2020: <https://www.thoughtco.com/systemic-racism-3026565>

Week 9:

Topic: Incarceration & the Criminal Justice System

Questions to Consider

- How can incarceration be both a cause and a consequence of poverty and inequality?
- How are incarceration policies tied to the legacy of slavery and discrimination?
- Which groups are most at risk of involvement with the corrections system? Why?
- How are detention and incarceration connected to our economic system?

Required Readings:

- Bryan Stevenson, 2019. Slavery gave America a fear of Black people and a taste for violent punishment. Both still define our criminal-justice system. The 1619 Project. NY Times. <https://nyti.ms/2SPnPNF>
- Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie. 2020. Prison Policy Initiative. (look at the charts and graphs): <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>
- Detained: How the US created the largest immigrant detention system in the world. 2019. Emily Kassie. The Marshall Project & The Guardian. Short text and about 20 minutes of short videos. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2019/09/24/detained>

Supplemental Readings

Coates, Tanehisi. 2015. The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration. *The Atlantic Magazine*. October 2015. (about 40 pages w/photos and charts)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/10/the-black-family-in-the-age-of-mass-incarceration/403246/>

MacFarquhar, Larissa. 2016. Building a Prison-to-School Pipeline. *The New Yorker*.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/12/12/the-ex-con-scholars-of-berkeley>

Week 10:

Topic: Employment & Labor Market Conditions

Questions to Consider

- How do our economic system and the labor market contribute to poverty & inequality?
- What has happened to median wages? Median income? Why?
- What changes have occurred in the labor market with regards to income, wages, & benefits and how have these changes contributed to poverty & inequality?
- If everyone had a job would poverty be eradicated? Why or why not?

Required Readings:

- The jobs we need, read (12 pages) or listen to audio podcast (20 minutes): <https://nyti.ms/3dZaUA0>.
- How much people are actually making. NY Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/02/opinion/wage-salary-inequality-compensation.html>
- State of the Unions: What happened to America’s Labor Movement. 2019. Caleb Crain. *The New Yorker*. (7 pages) or listen to audio podcast (20 minutes): <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/08/26/state-of-the-unions>

Supplementary Readings:

Mishel, Lawrence. 2013. Declining Value of the Federal Minimum Wage is a Major Factor Driving Inequality. Issue Brief #351. Economic Policy Institute. (p. 1-8) <http://www.epi.org/files/2013/minimum-wage.pdf>

Peri, Giovanni. *Immigrant Workers, Native Poverty and Labor Market Competition*. Policy Brief Vol 1, Number 3. Center for Poverty Research, University of California-Davis. (**Policy Brief Only: p. 1-2**). <http://poverty.ucdavis.edu/policy-brief/immigrant-workers-native-poverty-and-labor-market-competition>

Week 11:

Topic: Families, Children, Health & Well-being

Questions to Consider

- How and why do poverty and inequality impact children’s health, development, and life chances?
- What is the socioeconomic gradient in health? What do we know about racial disparities in health?
- How do poverty, inequality, and discrimination “get under the skin” to make us sick?

Required Readings:

- Williams, David, Jourdyn Lawrence, Brigitte Davis. 2019. Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research. *Annual Review of Public Health* 40:10-1255. <https://www-annualreviews-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-043750>
- Inequality & Health. Cross-National Comparisons & Inequality and Health in the US. Inequality.org: <https://inequality.org/facts/inequality-and-health/>
- Evans, Gary, Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne & Klebanov, Pamela. 2011. Stressing Out the Poor: Chronic Physiological Stress and the Income-Achievement Gap. *Pathways*. Stanford University Center for the Study of Inequality. (4 pages). https://web.stanford.edu/group/scspi/_media/pdf/pathways/winter_2011/PathwaysWinter11_Evans.pdf

Supplemental Reading

Villarosa, Linda. 2018. Why America's Black Mothers and Babies are in a Life-or-Death Crisis. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/11/magazine/black-mothers-babies-death-maternal-mortality.html>

Wakefield, Sarah & Wildeman, Christopher. 2014. Children of Imprisoned Parents and the Future of Inequality in the United States. Scholars Strategy Network. (2 pages). https://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/sites/default/files/ssn_key_findings_wakefield_and_wildeman_on_children_of_the_prison_boom.pdf

Goodman, Lisa A., Smyth, Katya Fels, Borges, Angela M. & Rachel Singer. 2009. When Crises Collide: How Intimate Partner Violence and Poverty Intersect to Shape Women's Mental Health and Coping. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 10(4): 306-329.

Gilroy, Heidi, Nava, Angeles, Nava, Maddoux, John, McFarlane, Judith, Symes, Lene, Koci, Anne & Nina Fredland. 2015. Poverty, Partner Abuse, and Women's Mental Health: New Knowledge for Better Practice. *Journal of Social Service Research* 41:145-157.

Shonkoff, Jack. 2011. Building a Foundation for Prosperity on the Science of Early Childhood Development. *Pathways*. Stanford University Center for the Study of Inequality. https://stanford.edu/group/scspi/media/pdf/pathways/winter_2011/PathwaysWinter11_Shonkoff.pdf

Week 12:

Topic: Social Policy 1: Power & Representation

Questions to Consider

- Who represents you at various levels of government (federal, state, local)?
- What are current debates about access to voting and voter fraud? What does research tell us? Who is most affected by recent laws?
- What is felon disenfranchisement? What is gerrymandering? Who is affected?
- How do power & representation affect poverty & inequality?

Required Readings:

- A Dream Undone: Inside the 50-year Campaign to Roll Back the Voting Rights Act: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/magazine/voting-rights-act-dream-undone.html?_r=0
- ACLU. Block the Vote: How Politicians are Trying to Block Voters from the Ballot Box. August 17, 2021. https://www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/block-the-vote-voter-suppression-in-2020/?initms_aff=nat&initms_chan=eml&utm_medium=eml&initms=200206_vraa_cultivation_gradead_sail&utm_source=sail&utm_campaign=vraa&utm_content=200206_votngrights_cultivation_gradead&ms_aff=nat&ms_chan=eml&ms=200206_vraa_cultivation_gradead_sail
- Best Explanation of Gerrymandering you will ever see. Washington Post. Video (2 minutes). <https://youtu.be/bGLRJ12uqmk>

Supplementary Reading

- Democracy Docket Explainer: What is the Filibuster:
<https://www.democracymocket.com/explainers/what-is-the-filibuster-and-how-can-the-senate-reform-it/>
- For Native Americans, a Historic Moment on the Path to Power at the Ballot Box. 2018. The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/us/native-american-voting-rights.html?smprod=nytcare-ipad&smid=nytcare-ipad-share>
- Gerrymandering Explained. 2015. Vox.com
<https://www.vox.com/cards/gerrymandering-explained/what-is-gerrymandering>

Disenfranchisement:

- Democracy Docket Explainer: What is Felony Disenfranchisement
<https://www.democracymocket.com/explainers/felony-disenfranchisement-explained/>
- Uggen, Christopher, Larson, Ryan, & Shannon, Sarah. 2016. *The Sentencing Project*. 6 Million Lost Voters: State-level Estimates of Felony Disenfranchisement, 2016.
<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016/>
- Staples, Brent. 2014. The Racist Origins of Felon Disenfranchisement. The New York Times. November 18, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-racist-origins-of-felon-disenfranchisement.html?_r=0

Voter Fraud:

- Brennan Center for Justice. NYU Law School
The Myth of Voter Fraud – just quick skim of the evidence here
<https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/voter-fraud>
- Resources on Voter Fraud Claims (comprehensive list of studies exploring all aspects of voter fraud claims)
<https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/resources-voter-fraud-claims>

Week 13:

Topic: Social Policy 2: Current Policies, the Good and the Bad

Questions to consider

- What are the largest and most important anti-poverty programs?
- What do we mean when we talk about hidden government expenditures?
- What do we mean by progressive and regressive taxes? What are examples of each? Who bears the burden of these taxes?
- What role do all these policy instruments play in redistributing wealth?
- Who benefits most from the government? Who benefits the least?

Required Readings:

The Good, Yet Insufficient– Safety Net Programs

- Center for Budget & Policy Priorities (CBPP). 2019. Economic Security & Health Insurance Programs Reduce Poverty and Provide Access to Needed Care.
<https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/9-2-15pov.pdf>

- Growing Apart: A Political History of American Inequality: A Tattered Safety Net: Social Policy and American Inequality. <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/growing-apart-a-political-history-of-american-inequality/a-tattered-safety-net-social-policy?path=differences-that-matter>

The Bad – Tax Policy

- David Leonhardt. The NYTimes: The Rich Really Do Pay Lower Taxes. 2019. <https://nyti.ms/2AOevjf>
- Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). 2020. Policy Basics: Tax Expenditures. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/policy-basics-federal-tax-expenditures>
- Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. 2016. How State Tax Policies Can Stop Increasing Inequality and Start Reducing It. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/how-state-tax-policies-can-stop-increasing-inequality-and-start>

Supplementary Readings:

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020. Policy Basics: Average and Marginal Tax rates: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-marginal-and-average-tax-rates>

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020. Policy Basics: Tax Exemptions, Deductions & Credits. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/policy-basics-tax-exemptions-deductions-and-credits>

Newman, Katherine. 2013. In the South and West, a Tax on Being Poor. The New York Times. <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/09/in-the-south-and-west-a-tax-on-being-poor/>

Week 14:

Topic: Social Policy 3: Innovative and Bold Policies to Reduce Poverty & Inequality

Questions to consider

- What are some of the most promising social policies that have been proposed that could reduce poverty and inequality?
- How are these policies) particularly helpful at reducing poverty and inequality?
- What are the arguments for and against these policies?

Required Reading:

- Why We Need Reparations for Black Americans. Rashawn Ray and Andre Perry. 2020. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BigIdeas_Ray_Perry_Reparations.pdf
- How Can We Fix Income and Wealth Inequality in America: Checklist <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/opinion/sunday/income-inequality-solutions.html>
<https://nyti.ms/2NXL9p7>
- Poor people's campaign: 14 policy priorities: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/resource/policy-and-legislative-priorities/>

- Their Jubilee platform: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/jubilee-platform/>
- Universal Basic Income Explained. Vox Media (2 minute video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9xVWOfXW7U&feature=youtu.be>
- Wealth Tax:
 - Vox. A better way to tax the rich. Wealth Tax Explained (3:45 minutes). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTwPHuE_HrU
- OR
- Emmanuel Saez & Gabriel Zucman, Authors of Triumph of Injustice. Brookings Institution. (Video 5:20 minutes). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qM7Vy4DK-A>
- Tackling Race Inequalities in Health and Housing. Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/time-for-justice-tackling-race-inequalities-in-health-and-housing/>

Supplementary Readings

Grand Challenges for Social Work. Reversing Extreme Inequality. 2017 (*Responding to Extreme Inequality: p. 8-15*). American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare. <http://aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WP16-with-cover-2.pdf>

Anti-Poverty Policy Innovations for the US (p. 6-25). 2017. Institute for Research on Poverty. University of Wisconsin-Madison. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc333.pdf>

Bold Visions for Ending Poverty. 2017. Pathways Magazine. Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality. (*These are all short w/lots of graphs & pictures*)

- Chapter 1: A New Anti-Poverty Policy Litmus Test (p. 1-5). Edin, Kathryn, Shaefer, Luke & Tach, Laura. http://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways_Spring2017_Litmus-Test.pdf
- Chapter 2: Cash Matters and Place Matters (p. 1-7). Smeeding, Timothy. http://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways_Spring2017_Cash-Place.pdf
- Chapter 3: A New Safety Net for 21st Century Families. (p. 1-6). Berger, Lawrence. http://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways_Spring2017_Family-Safety-Net.pdf
- Chapter 4: It's Time to Complete the Work-Based Safety Net. (p. 1-5). Shaefer & Edin. http://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways_Spring2017_Work-Safety-Net.pdf

VAWC - Reading

Hahn, Sur Ah & Judy Postmus. 2014. Economic Empowerment of Impoverished IPV Survivors: A Review of the Best Practice Literature and Implications for Policy. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 15(2):79-93.

Also Worth Reading

NY Times Magazine Series on *The Future of Work*. 2019. Matthew Desmond. Dollars on the Margin: The \$15 Minimum Wage Doesn't Just Improve Lives, It Saves Them.
<https://nyti.ms/2GCxJNH>

Week 15:

Topic: Student Presentations and Discussions of Op-Ed/Blog Post Assignments

Final assignment due end of day week 15